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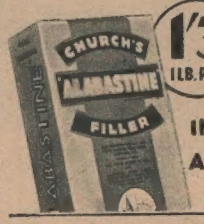

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EDITORIAL

Why our British film studios are in the dumps

A VIGOROUS CAMPAIGN has been waged all this year to get entertainment tax on films reduced.

It is claimed that the British film industry cannot pay its way out of what is left of box office receipts after the Treasury has taken its £3 million a month.

Well, it all depends what you mean by the British film industry. . . .

That industry is organized in three parts. There is the production side, which makes films. There is the distribution side, which is the channel between producers, both British and American, and the cinemas. And there is the exhibition side, which means the cinema owners.

Nobody seriously contends that the distributors and exhibitors are crushed by the burden of entertainment tax. As long as cinemas go on renting films, the distributors make their profit. As long as the public goes to the pictures the exhibitors make *their* profit.

Only after the two profits have been made is the voice of the British producer heard crying, "What about me?"

And he protests, very loudly, that after the Chancellor and the distributors and the exhibitor have all taken their share of your one-and-ninepences there is not enough left to pay for his films, let alone show him a profit. So British studios are closing down, and the industry now employs little more than 4,000 people, compared with 7,200 a year ago.

ONE answer to the producer's wail is that he *ought* to be able to pay his way out of his share. JOHN BULL has already examined that problem and concluded that production costs have been far too high. But today there are signs of reform on the producing side. Efforts are being made to cut out waste, speed up work, and run the studios more economically and efficiently.

In fact there is reason to believe that if producers now get co-operation from the rest of the industry and the Government they will respond by giving us good films at lower cost.

Meanwhile, it is very important to make sure that the other two sides of the industry do not hamper the recovery of the production side.

For obviously we want more British films. The public wants them because they portray our own way of life instead of an alien one. The Government wants them because American films cost dollars.

But—and this is the crucial "but" — distributors and exhibitors don't particularly care whether they handle American or British films. Why should they? From a money-making point of view, they are interested only in films that will attract the public. And they are in the business to make money, after all.

Another point: to the British film magnate concerned with his total overall profit it is cheaper and less hazardous to rent films from America than to risk fortunes in making them in his studios here.

Few good pictures cost less than £100,000—and £250,000 is nearer the mark for a top-liner with front-rank stars. Comparable American pictures cost perhaps a quarter of this sum to rent—with no risk.

So, to a combine whose money is spread over both cinemas and studios, this is the question: "Shall we gamble a quarter of a million which we can easily lose (partly because of entertainment tax), or shall we play safe and take an almost sure profit from renting an American film?"

The answer is obvious. You won't get more films of the right type produced here by people who can earn money with less risk by importing American pictures. And it is no use making entertainment tax a scapegoat for the evils of a system which discourages, rather than stimulates, production.

It would be worth the Government's while to offer a tax concession only if the money could be ploughed back into the industry to be used solely in the making of more first-rate British films.

So far, Government policy has been directed more towards saving dollars than saving the British studios. It is high time to take a longer view and put the interests of British film production first.

But we must face the fact that attempts to help the producing side of the industry are useless unless the financial control of production can first be divorced from those of exhibition. A healthy production force can be built up only under a system that will ensure fair and free exhibition of British pictures of merit in any "circuit" or group of independently-owned cinemas.

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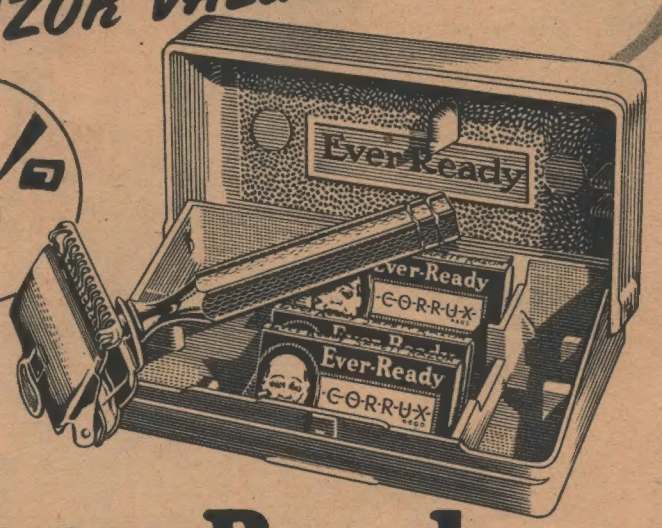

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JUNE 17, 1950 VOL. 87 No. 2294 PHONE: TEMPLE BAR 2468 GRAMS: HEROICALLY, WESTCENT, LONDON

FREE SPEECH

How to speed the houses

YOUR LEADING ARTICLE on incentives in the building trade (JOHN BULL, May 27) should be read by everyone, workers and employers alike. The fear of working oneself out of a job is perhaps the biggest influence in retarding production.

But there is another factor which should be stressed. Many employers seem to have a dread of letting their employees earn a decent wage: if piece workers start drawing a double-figure wage, attempts are made to lower piece rates. The result is that, rather than face a fight to maintain the rates, the men do not produce to their full capacity. Surely, if an employer makes a profit on his employees' output, it should not matter how high the men's earnings are. — W. SLATER, Ossett, Yorks.

. . . I am one of 143 building joiners unemployed in this area. I have had only six months' work in two years; others are even less fortunate. Today you still "work yourself out of a job"—when it's finished, so are you—and the incentive bonus schemes are such that you would have to pay the builder to be employed by him.—T. V. THOMPSON, 73 Marine Approach, South Shields, Co. Durham.

. . . Any bricklayer, carpenter or joiner can leave his job for work in a factory at two or three pounds a week more. The answer is to put the whole lot on a piecework basis and show that the job pays good dividends to the man willing to work.—THOMAS SUTTON, 39 Bexley Road, Erdington, Birmingham.

Unfair To Husbands?

DISILLUSIONED HUSBANDS WHO, like myself, have encountered the overwhelmingly one-sided nature of our marriage laws should be grateful to Fred Wormull ("The Man Some Women Hate," JOHN BULL, May 27). Many more such men are needed to level the scales in matrimonial disputes and, in particular, to fight the "maintenance racket." I am forced by a court order to pay one quarter of my income to a wife who, for over eight years, has consistently refused to perform any domestic or wifely duties and who has walked out of the home and returned no less than two dozen times. — HUSBAND, Wimbledon, London, S.W.19.

Not *Any* Old Rags

WHAT ARE "OLD CLOTHES" these days? I produced for the rag-and-bone man two ladies' coats (shabby but otherwise good), three pairs of boys' trousers (one only patched, the other simply outgrown), two pairs of children's shoes needing repair and a silk dress of my own (in good condition minus its belt). Each article was carefully sorted over and rejected, except for the silk dress. For this I was offered the princely sum of 1s. 6d.—MRS. M. GOLD, Middlesex.

Tomorrow Never Came

NEVIL SHUTE PAINTS a poignant and remarkably accurate picture of Japanese behaviour towards prisoners in your very fine serial, "A Town Like Alice." After wandering round Malaya and Siam, scarecrow fashion, for three and a half years as a guest of the Japs I was only too familiar with the face-slappings, the kicks and those glib promises of food, clothing, medical supplies, rest and shelter—"tomorrow." It was always "tomorrow," of course, and I need hardly say our hopes were never realized.—B. G. CAMPION, H.M.S. *Lochinvar*, Port Edgar, South Queensferry, Scotland.

. . . Nevil Shute has chosen a title which, to me as a writer, is one of the most fascinating, intriguing and generally captivating I have ever come across.—EDMUND BURTON, 27 Gleneldon Road, Streatham, London, S.W.16.

"Please Ask Us To Dance"

WHY DO YOUNG MEN hesitate to ask a girl who wears spectacles to dance? Unless she is extraordinarily pretty—and few of us are—a boy will not ask a girl with specs if he does not know her. They should take a chance—I feel sure they would find us no different from other girls.—MISS D. M., Lancs.

Not A Parson's Job

THE CURATE MENTIONED by A. T. Senior ("Free Speech," May 20) was not ordained to deliver newspapers. He would have been better employed in his study or at his prayer desk.—ANOTHER CURATE, Fife, Scotland.

. . . I can sympathize with the vicar who asked for a collection at the wedding service. If people take no opportunity of helping the church financially, but expect the building to be available for baptisms and weddings, it seems just to ask them for contributions on these occasions. And if a heathen is defined as a person who rarely attends church, then the majority of wedding guests must be so classified.—REV. D. M. GREENHALGH, The Vicarage, Guilden Morden, Royston, Herts.

Young Patient's Plea

HARVEY GRAHAM'S ARTICLE, "New Lives For Old" (JOHN BULL, May 27), was a revelation of what is being done for our elderly people. I don't grudge any of them a chance of a new and healthier life—but what about the younger generation? I am twenty-eight years old and owing to illness have hardly worked a full year since the last war. For ten months I have been practically bedridden with a displaced intervertebral disk and chronic sciatica. There are hundreds on the waiting list for the operation I need. Meanwhile I am eating more pain-relieving tablets than food.—MRS. E. N., Glasgow.

John Bull welcomes readers' views, experiences and ideas for publication. A guinea is paid for every letter used. Mark the envelope "Free Speech" and make sure your full name and address is in the letter.

THIS WEEK'S COVER

"I AM not one of those people who look upon the gipsy as a type of mobile spiv," says cover artist Gordon Nicoll, R.I. "I have a considerable respect for these colourful characters who arrive each year at a camp near my own home in Surrey."

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CHIVERS JELLIES

Flavoured with ripe fruit juice

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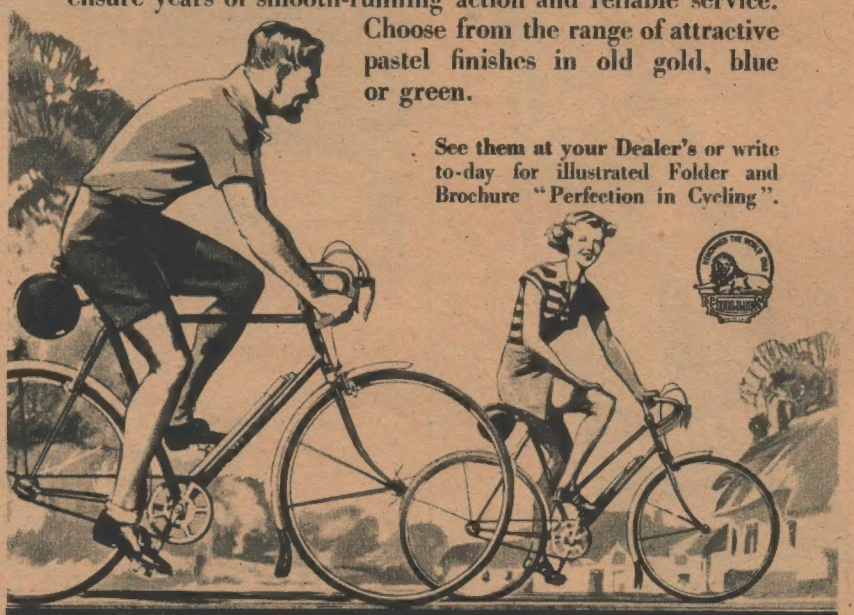
Matched CLUB MODELS

Here's a really handsome pair of stylish Lightweight bicycles, as comfortable to ride as they are good to look at. Everything in the specification has been carefully chosen to ensure years of smooth-running action and reliable service. Choose from the range of attractive pastel finishes in old gold, blue or green.

See them at your Dealer's or write to-day for illustrated Folder and Brochure "Perfection in Cycling".



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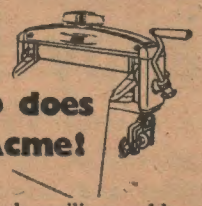
Women care for lovely clothes...



so does Acme!

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from a SMALL TABLET

Medicines—like people—are judged first and foremost by what they do. On the right, we stress a few of the many things that 'ASPRO' does—and does quickly. These claims are proved and demonstrated every minute of the day. For there is always somebody, somewhere, who is taking 'ASPRO' and experiencing the great relief it brings. 'ASPRO' is safe and effective because it helps Nature to put you right. It leaves a feeling of well-being—has no harmful after-effects whatever.

SUDDEN SUMMER CHILLS DISPELLED

SUNGLARE HEADACHES RELIEVED

SLEEPLESSNESS OVERCOME

RHEUMATIC TWINGES GO

Let 'ASPRO' come to your aid NOW!

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"I thought you said there would be no more coffee!"

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"Actually it is Brooke Bond Coffee and Chicory Essence. It certainly compares with Pure Coffee and costs much less, also because sweetened, saves sugar."

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1/0½d. per bottle – *the highest content bottle at its price*

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when healthy kidney action has rid you of rheumatic pains, backache and urinary troubles.

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Possibly you feel tired, miserable and depressed; your back aching, muscles and joints stiff and sore. You may be bothered by lumbago, rheumatic pains or the common urinary disorders due to sluggish kidney action.

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SANDEMAN

PORT

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You'll like it!

Passionate Marathon

by W. E. ARMSTRONG

The Tour de France sends the Continent crazy for a month. It's an epic battle of 3,000 miles, in which all the riders are demi-gods and punctured tyres are national tragedies

ON AN AFTERNOON of last July, I was standing, with hundreds of others, in a gloomy village near the top of Le Tourmalet pass, in the central Pyrenees. In spite of the rain and the icy wind that swooped in brutal gusts from the surrounding peaks, we were an excited, cheerful crowd. Many of us had risen at dawn to climb up here from distant valleys; others had come hundreds of miles by bus or motor bicycle; all had been shivering in the open for some hours.

Suddenly, answering that mysterious tension which tells a crowd the moment has come, all crane forward to watch the long, steeply winding road. A black car grinds past us, another follows. Twenty yards behind it, jostled by yet more cars and now by shouting spectators running by his side, a single cyclist toils out of the mist. Covered in mud, his face showing every sign of acute agony and giving at each churn of the pedals a painfully audible gasp, he wobbles up the slope in a volley of clapping and cheers.

He is past us in a second, walled up in a roaring rearguard of cars and motor bicycle combinations, but others soon come after him. Some come singly, others ride wheel to wheel in bunches of ten or twenty. To me these haggard, powerful men, daemonically pedalling past each other like survivors flying some volcanic disaster, are about as striking as a string of dried onions, but by the faithful each is known and welcomed.

Now names and hats are flung in the air. "*Allez Jacques!*" roars the crowd. "Go it, Appo!" "Ah, Bobet, my beauty"—a man dashes out to propel his favourite up the last killing yards of the col, and Bobet is gone with a groan and swish of tyres. For half a minute there is nothing, then "Here comes the Belgian," someone cries. Cheers for the Belgian. No! it's the Italian—hisses for him. In less than seven minutes, grey and grimacing, the procession has vanished. For me it has left nothing but an impression of hunched shoulders and muscular excess, of men extended beyond the seemly limit of fatigue, but for everyone else those seven minutes have been full of drama. A man is weeping with emotion, a woman spectator has fainted, and blows are being struck to defend some slandered hero's name. Laughing and shouting, or awed and solemn, we crowd into the café or set off for our homes. The *Tour de France* has passed.

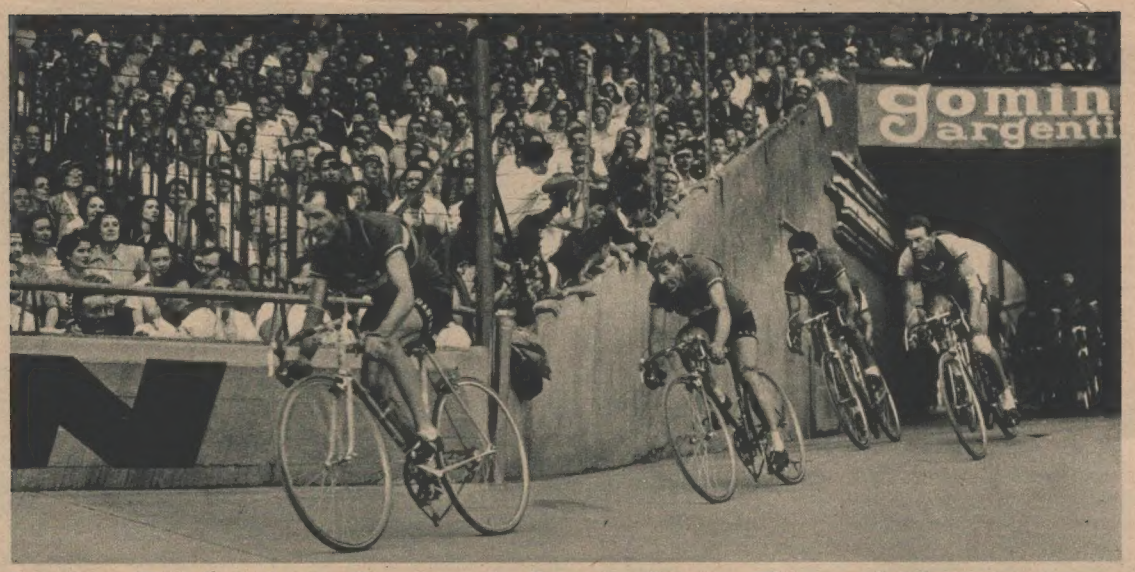
In its essentials the scene I witnessed in Le Tourmalet is repeated hundreds of times every year in the towns and villages of France, Belgium, Italy and Switzerland. In these countries, millions of people think, dream and, through the devoted commentaries of radio, Press and cinema, participate in this marathon bicycle race which lasts for nearly a month.

The Tour reaches the Pyrenees. Here the aces "attack" and excitement becomes frenzied

This is the more surprising because, as a spectacle, bicycle road racing must come very low on the list. Even if one man pedalling did not so much resemble another doing the same thing, few people ever see more of the runners than I did during those minutes up in Le Tourmalet. Yet of the hundreds of races held on the Continent every year, only the *Tour de France*, which is necessarily the least rewarding from the spectators' point of view, arouses an almost national interest. Like our Derby, with its vague appeal to thousands that never give horse-racing a thought, the *Tour* in progress excites innumerable Frenchmen to whom a bicycle is simply the machine that takes them to work.

Although France is a country of cyclists, there are other reasons for the extraordinary popularity of the *Tour de France*. One is the exceptionally tough nature of the race itself; another is the immense and curious publicity given to the riders taking part.

The race, which was first run in 1903, is organized by the Parisian sporting paper, *L'Equipe*. It begins and ends in Paris and takes



Last lap. Bartali leads the Tour into the Parc des Princes. Three weeks' hysteria are over

place, usually in July or August, over a predetermined course of five thousand kilometres. Between the massed start and the moment when the garlanded winner rides round the Parc des Princes are three weeks of what must be the most sustained athletic effort the human frame can decently be asked to endure.

The course varies slightly every year, but the grand design remains constant and is geographically planned to make the unfortunate participants box the compass of physical distress. Thus, between July 13 and August 7 this year, they must go north to Liège in Belgium, south to the Spanish frontier and as far east as San Remo in Italy. They will be grilled by the sun of the Midi and almost frozen in the Alps. Roads will vary from the greasy, dangerous cobbles of the Ardennes to the rutted dust of the monotonous Gascony plains. They must strain up long, impossible gradients and shoot down near-precipices at fifty miles an hour. In all they will be riding for twenty-one days with only four days' rest; the winner's average will be twenty-one miles an hour for over three thousand miles.

Such are some of the purely physical aspects of the race and, one might think, they are formidable enough to claim the riders' undistracted attention. That is the last thing the sponsors admit. Years ago, before the *Tour* was organized, no doubt each rider set off with the idea of winning the race himself. Today the majority of starters are simply employed as pacemakers and general lackeys to a handful of "aces."

Victory Depends On The Team

Unless things go very wrong, it is one of these men that will win the race; there are no outsiders in the *Tour de France*. Who the winner will be depends less on personal ability—and all the "aces" are outstanding athletes—as on the devotion and discipline of his team mates. There are usually a dozen teams, national and regional, but whatever the colours they carry all are sponsored and financed by bicycle or tyre firms.

Each team has its "sporting director," generally a retired professional, who follows the race in a car and directs day to day tactics as the battle proceeds. He has absolute authority over his men and must be a considerable personality. The sporting director has with him a doctor, various technicians, a trainer, one or more mechanics and anybody else that by influence or trickery can wedge himself into the cavalcade. One Parisian weekly alone is mobilizing two aeroplanes, a mobile laboratory, two portable printing presses and six motor cycle combinations. To complete the hurly-burly are small fleets of loud-speaking publicity vans. The complete procession will cover several miles and, seen from the air, resembles an army in disorderly retreat, or some gigantic crawling insect to whose jointed body the thin line of cyclists forms the wavering antenna.

The race this year will be run in twenty-two stages or *étapes*. Each stage ends in some favoured town, the more important the better, where the riders spend the night, and which pays the organizers a thousand pounds for the pleasure of receiving the *Tour de France*. Last year the surly town council of Nice refused to pay the sum demanded and the stage went to Aosta, in Italy. This caused great indignation in France, whose relations with Italy, as far as the bicycle goes, are anything but neighbourly.

The distance of each stage varies. This year the longest "leg" is the last, Dijon to Paris—206 miles. The shortest will be Dinard—St. Brieuc, in Brittany, fifty miles run against the clock. The *Reine Étape*, the master stage, where the race reaches its most crucial point, will probably be between Nice and Gap, in the Hautes-Alpes. This run of 145 miles climbs three of the highest passes; it is here that the aces will "attack."

Race Is Won In The Passes

The whole race is decided on total time taken, an arrangement which often robs the closing stages of dramatic interest. In 1948 Gino Bartali, an Italian, had the race so well won in the passes of the Alps that he was content, with several minutes in hand, to trundle home to Paris in the ruck. The same thing happened last year when Fausto Coppi, another Italian, established such a time lead in the Pyrenees that, barring a fatal fall, he had the *Tour* in his pocket.

Neither Coppi nor Bartali, the two most celebrated Continental aces, could have been so certain of victory without complete confidence in his team, or "servants," as they are called. These men, all stout racers themselves, are there to see that their elected champion is kept out of trouble. If he punctures, one of them will be there to lend him his machine so that not a second shall be lost; if he falls, they will patch him up; if he is obstructed by cars or spectators, they will go ahead and clear the way. They will even shield him from a troublesome wind. When a rival is doing too well, a few "servants" will set a killing pace in the hope of making him crack.

All such tactics are decided by the director of the team at the nightly halts, when every team reviews the situation and plans the next day's moves. Besides this feint and riposte of higher strategy the riders have to contend with an ever-rising moral tension, mutual jealousy, sabotage and even physical violence. Some years ago, a French champion had to retire with a broken leg, a partisan spectator having clubbed him as he pedalled past. In 1929, when Victor Fontan, a great favourite, had his machine mysteriously fall to pieces, all France cried "Sabotage."

Besides these imponderables of knavery and chance there is a mass of regulations to remember. Whether "X" did or did not hang on to a passing car, or take nourishment at an unlawful time, or ride dangerously, or wilfully urge spectators to push him up a hill—such are the questions thrashed out at every halting point, often with sound and fury. Was Antonin Magne, the French idol, really poisoned in 1931? Nobody knows, but it's thrilling to speculate. It's all in the *Tour de France*.

It is at the half-way stage, when the Pyrénées are reached and three or four riders begin to dominate the race, that the Press, hitherto dawdling, as it were, really gets down to its work. Now the *Tour* is lifted to an epic plane. The riders become heroic figures battling in murk and flame against unrelenting mountains and the malice of Time. They are called "gods" and "martyrs," the passes up which they pedal become "calvaries," and last year an Italian paper didn't hesitate to speak of the "Via Dolorosa" of the Alps. Photographs no longer show them bowling along some pleasant road waving to the apple-cheeked peasantry but heaving themselves up frowning summits against a dramatic sky. Punctures are tragedies, falls Destiny; the grandeur of the scenery is gracefully said to match the stature of the struggling giants. It is the most emotionally successful publicity possible and it induces every eye in France to turn an agonized gaze on the "Man in the Yellow Singlet."

The Challenge From Italy

The yellow singlet is worn by the rider who, on time-total, is leading in the race. The man who wears it going through the Alps or the Pyrénées is usually the eventual winner. But it is possible to win the *Tour* without having worn the singlet at all. This happened in 1947, when a Frenchman named Robic made a prodigious spurt in the last few minutes. Such an accident is not likely this year if, as seems probable, the Italians enter in force.

Ask any Frenchman to explain the Italian supremacy in Continental road racing and he will answer: "Coppi, Bartali—and team discipline." He might also add that Fausto Coppi is the greatest road rider of all time—the *campionnissimo*, the champion of champions. Coppi, a hawk-faced, gangling man of thirty, would be a phenomenal athlete by any standards. At his age, with his superb style and great intelligence, he should stay at the top for many years, though, as French experts hopefully point out, he has a suspicion of varicose veins.

Varicose veins is an occupational complaint of cycle racers; another is what the papers delicately call "boils on the saddle muscles." Neither seems to affect the second famous Italian, Gino Bartali, Coppi's rival, who won the *Tour* in 1938 and 1948. The duel between these two champions—they are said to dislike each other personally—was one of the highlights of the 1949 race. Everybody hopes to see it renewed this year.

Not only French and Italians will line up for the *Tour*. There are Belgians, Swiss, Spaniards, Dutch and Luxembourgers among the 120 starters this year. The winner of the *Tour* gets a thousand pounds, but his title is worth incalculably more in hard cash and prestige. If he is careful he is made for life and will certainly buy that bicycle shop or restaurant past whose site he has so often and so desperately pedalled.

Sponsors Reap Good Profits

He will not be the only one to cash in on the *Tour*. In all, the prize money will total £10,000, and in spite of having paid all expenses for the competing teams—food, hotel bills, traffic control, etc.—the sponsors will come out with a handsome profit. "It's no longer the *Tour de France*," said a wit last year, "but a commercial *tour de force*."

There is truth in the gibe, but it can never diminish the glamour of this dour, bustling, incredible race. For three weeks its millions of fans will forget the bomb and last month's butcher's bill. Their hearts will be with the *peloton*, the platoon of cyclists pounding down the dusty roads or groaning up the iron hills, and, more especially, with the most important personality in France—The Man in the Yellow Singlet.

A tourist has but to ask after the Yellow Singlet to have any Frenchman's instant sympathy and attention. But let him not ask the question lightly. It's a very serious matter. THE END

"If our boys want to fight, we send them into the meadow. The aim is to avoid putting a complete stopper on anything and to make obedience easy"

Father's way with the naughty boy

by JOHN MAY

I'm for giving children freedom to develop. They can't be good all the time, but running wild with no discipline at all is not the answer. It's a matter of where to draw the line

THE CRAZE FOR COLLECTING foreign stamps taught my sons a whole world of geography, and gave me a queer lesson, too. At first the boys eagerly bagged any unusual ones on my letters. Then they ransacked local shops for transparent packets. Finally, after much consultation, Rodney and Garry wrote to a box number advertisement for an "approval set."

By selling some to school chums, they earned a commission of free ones for themselves. An epidemic of philately swept the locality. In the boys' playroom an exchange and mart sprang up. Terse repetitions of "Got that, got that one" gave way to cries of delight as something new appeared. Tense bargaining always followed.

In the middle of one of these sessions a certain village kid suddenly and unaccountably went home. A few minutes later, Garry missed his best stamp. The boy had been admiring it only two or three seconds before he left. An indignant and righteous argument started. Should they go straightaway to his home and accuse him? Punch him on the nose at school next day? Or tell his mother, or the teacher, or even the police? Nobody had seen him take the stamp. I could see only trouble resulting from an accusation. "Has he got many stamps?" I asked. "No, we've tons more than he has," "Do you still want him to come up here and play?" They nodded. "Then forget it," I said. This is the first time the episode has been mentioned since.

It's easy to be broadminded about other people's youngsters. The other way about, with one of my own sons accused, I would have been badly shaken. Especially today, any suspicion of stealing, lying, violence or bad manners sends parents into a panic.. "Are we treating our son right? Will—heaven forbid—he grow into a cosh boy or a spiv?"

Pranks That Lead To Trouble

Once it was "boys will be boys," and if they got into too much mischief they had a good hiding for it. Now life is not so simple. "Give the child every possible freedom to express his personality," the psychologists say. And freedom is fine. But round the corner is the uneasy fear that a high-spirited prank may easily be labelled "juvenile delinquency"—with police, reform schools, and even prison looming up behind.

There's nothing goody-goody about my five sons. Thinking back, I can recall a calendar of boyish "crime." One of them used to hide slices of rationed bread to give to his dog. Another took a razor blade to my new toothbrush, shaved it bare, and denied all knowledge of it. It was more serious when somebody brought home eight or nine rubbers from school, when a crop of crude words and vulgar sketches erupted on the bedroom wall, and when somebody called an elderly female relative an "adjectival old haybag"—and within her hearing at that!

Rodney, Garry and young Richard all had a share in this list. Jonathan, rising two, recently took to turning on the taps of the gas stove. He knew well enough he should not. He was smacked for it. So now he turns them on just the same, looks hard at his mother, holds out his hand for a smack—and screws up his face in anticipation. What can you do with a kid like that?

The lazy, unthinking method is to knock hell out of him with a clear conscience. Don't worry about arranging for counter attractions or keeping temptation out of his way. According to some disciplinarians, you can't start restricting, hitting (and hating) your child too soon—they ignore the very real danger of hammering out small mischief into the pattern of serious misdemeanour. It's all part of the "children should be seen and not heard" way of life. Lewis Carroll guyed it in *Alice*: "Speak roughly to your little boy and smack him when he sneezes, he only does it to annoy because he knows it teases." Today, believe it or not, they put it into books on expectant motherhood and practise it in maternity wards.

The books tell mothers *not* to pick up the baby when he cries, *not* to lie in bed with him. When my wife Bessie had a baby in hospital they would not allow her to feed him at two a.m. (she did so directly she arrived home). "You must show him who's master," said the nurse. Who can wonder that, deprived of their rightful comfort and love from their first day in this world, some kids grow up to revenge themselves by beating women over the head?

What's the alternative? "A baby never cries for nothing, nor to annoy you," Bessie says—and acts on it. Results back her up. Looking into the cot one day, Richard said: "I've never heard a baby cry so much as this one doesn't!" It's as true as ever that there are "no problem children, only problem parents."

Sometimes it's a problem to know how to handle things. One afternoon we left the boys with an elderly sitter-in. When we returned home there'd been a fire in some outhouses. I saw the kids acting suspiciously and asked what was

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Critical Day

by BARRY PEROWNE

ILLUSTRATED BY HAROLD FORSTER

It began in the morning. By evening it was serious. After all, London seemed very remote—and Yolande need never know

THE SUN OF A PERFECT Mediterranean morning had just lifted clear of the hills which almost landlocked the little bay of Puerto-de-Soller, in Majorca, when a holiday couple called Brown, occupying Room No. 8 of the Hotel Costa Brava, rang the bell for their rolls and coffee.

Alan Brown, a long, loose-limbed individual of twenty-six, with wiry blond hair, was wandering about the room in red morocco slippers and a pair of white flannels, lathering his serviceable face with a shaving-brush. Pleasantly conscious of the sun's warmth on his tanned torso and of the several hundred gratifying miles which lay between him and the London office in which he worked, he came to stand at the foot of his wife's bed, watching her with earnest grey eyes.

Holidays can have an unsettling effect, especially as their end draws in sight. At that time, for married couples particularly, every holiday is apt to hold at least one critical day. "All this salt and sun," said Yolande, happily unaware of the onset of such a day, "all this salt and sun is terrible for the hair."

Yolande Brown, who was twenty-two, was also enviably tanned. Under a mosquito net suspended from the ceiling in a large, loose knot, she was sitting in bed reading, with her attractive shoulders snug against a pile of pillows, and a ribbon in her tawny hair.

Alan lathered a perturbed face and walked to the window. On a hilltop bare against the blue sky, stood a crumbling watchtower eloquent of the days of Tunisian corsairs. Around the wide curve of the shore, small waves tumbled glassily on the sand. And moored fore and aft, lay the schooner *Barbary Witch*, of Tangier.

Alan's shaving brush hovered motionless.

The schooner's bowsprit pointed longingly towards the harbour mouth. She had been lying thus for months, ever since, after a running fight with a carabinero cutter, she had been seized for smuggling and confiscated.

Alan had heard the story from a chance acquaintance he had made here, a man who called himself Colonel Burt L. Jackson but who had been better known in his day, he had confided to Alan, as Cactus Jack. The local people here in Puerto had quite a different name for him; they called him Señor Whisky.

Alan admired and envied Cactus Jack almost as much as he admired and coveted the *Barbary Witch*, and he was haunted by an idea that, being a confiscated vessel, the *Barbary Witch* might be bought very cheaply.

The lather dried on his face. In his mind, he was composing a letter of dignified resignation from the office and from all humdrum things. He was setting out with Yolande, and a few congenial volunteers as crew, around the world in the *Barbary Witch*. Hundreds of people had made such voyages, paid their way somehow. Why not Yolande and he? Why did he find it so hard to come out flatfooted and suggest to her that they sell up everything and buy the schooner?

"*Hola, amigo!*" called a cheerful voice.

Alan looked down. A man had walked on to the terrace of the hotel. Coloured umbrellas shaded the small tables there. The man was about thirty, lithe and good-looking, with a neat moustache, a flashing smile and hair that gleamed like black enamel in the sun. He wore white flannels and a beach shirt, and a bracelet of thick gold links glinted on his wrist as he lifted a hand to Alan. Alan gestured back with his shaving brush.

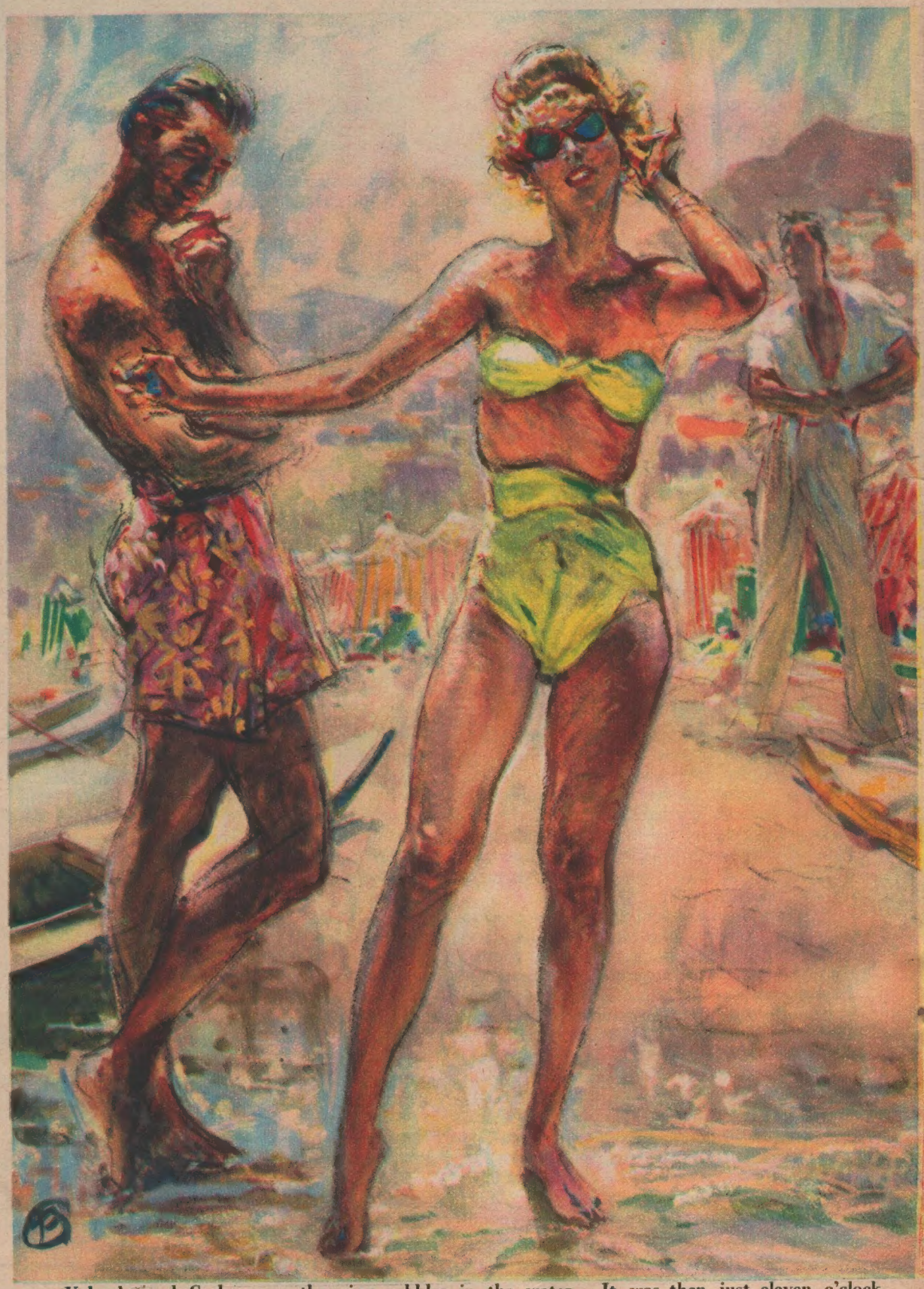
"Who is it?" asked Yolande, behind him.

"Carlos Cajal," said Alan without enthusiasm.

"Already?" Yolande exclaimed. She closed the book with a bang. "We promised to go swimming with him this morning. Alan, where *is* that coffee?"

LYING on the sandy beach meditating the problem of how he could acquire the *Barbary Witch*, Alan raised the arm with which he was shading his eyes, looked at his watch. Just on eleven—first drink time for Cactus Jack. Alan heaved himself up on an elbow to glance at Yolande and Carlos Cajal, chatting nearby.

Carlos, when staying at his villa in Puerto, haunted the Hotel Costa Brava, seeking his



Yolande and Carlos were throwing pebbles in the water. It was then just eleven o'clock

diversion among the foreign visitors. He had attached himself adhesively to the Browns. Alan had scant use for him, but he seemed to amuse Yolande.

The two of them were raking pebbles out of the sand to throw at a stick floating just beyond the lazy wavelets. In a coat of tan and a pair of sunglasses, with a bit of some primrose material here and there by way of swimming-suit, Yolande was enjoying herself. For aquatic purposes she wore her hair sort of gathered up on top of her head in a mode which gave her such a look of innocence that it produced always in Alan a feeling of careworn responsibility for her. As he stood up, brushing sand from his lengthy legs, and pulled on flannels and beach shirt over his trunks, he scowled at Carlos Cajal.

"Where are you going, Alan?" Yolande asked, looking round.

"Just along the front, dear, to get a paper."

She blew him a kiss which made him, as he walked up the beach, feel guilty for holding out on her. The fact was, Yolande and Cactus Jack belonged so obviously to different worlds that he never had mentioned either of them to the other. If it came to that, neither had he done anything very much to correct a seeming inference of Cactus Jack's that he, Alan, was a bit of a rolling stone, with an eye to the main chance.

"I've fought in sixty-two wars," he had told Alan one morning at the Cafe de los Tres Hermanos. "Ever fought in a war, Al?"

"Oh, well," Alan had said—"tail-end of the last one."

Cactus Jack had dismissed an irrelevance. "One war," he said tolerantly. "I've fought in sixty-two. I've been a colonel in sixteen armies. I've fought in Mexico with both Pancho Villa and Zapata. A rough diamond, Zapata. He only smiled when he killed. I was with Mendietta in Cuba and Sandino in Nicaragua. I've fought in the Gran Chaco, and I was with Abd-el-Krim in Morocco."

Cactus Jack had pulled meditatively at his long, grey moustache.

"I'm British to the bone, well-born of a county family. I could have had an Oxford and Cambridge education," Cactus Jack had said, "but I rose above it. I've fought with warlords in China, Red Sea sheikhs an' Abyssinian rases. Only civil war ever I missed was the Spanish. That's why I'm camped in Majorca—they got nothing on me here. I rent a shanty back up in the groves. I'm not so young as I was, an' I'm gettin' my memories organized. I'm thinkin' of writin' the memoirs of an ubiquitous life, if the whisky money holds out. Pass the bottle, Al."

ALAN ducked in under the faded awning of the Café de los Tres Hermanos. After the sun glare outside, it was a moment before he could discern figures—a group of blue-shirted, hempen-sandalled men muttering around a decrepit slot-machine, and four more playing billiards at a rickety table.

Cactus Jack was sitting alone in a corner, a whisky-bottle and glass before him. "Nobody leaves me in peace," he said querulously, and leaned forward. "It's like I told you before, Al, there's a lot of contraband run into this island, mostly tobacco. Behind it, in this area, is a man of the name of Ibañez. Seems he's had a couple of cargoes hijacked lately, and he don't know who's responsible. He's lookin' around for a suspect, an' I got a notion he's picked on me."

"Why you?" Alan asked.

Cactus Jack tugged aggrievedly at his moustache. "Give a dog a bad name. . . ." he said. "I'm an old man, I got literary occupations, I ain't lookin' for trouble." His voice hardened. "Where I get my livin' an whisky money is *my* business. They better quit spyin' round my shanty or someone's liable to get punctured."

He rolled a cigarette, inserted it under the nicotine-stained parting in his moustache. "But you was lookin' for me, Al," he said.

"I've been wondering about the chances of buying that schooner, out there," Alan said. He spoke rather as though he picked up schooners every day. It was the influence of Cactus Jack.

Cactus Jack's close-set, pale eyes studied him shrewdly. "Got an idea for makin' money with her, eh? Well, it's a young man's game. Tell you what I'll do, Al. I'll prospect around and find out who you approach, what kind of an offer would swing the deal. I'll do that for a friend, Al. Leave it to me. I'll get busy pronto."

He tossed a couple of five-peseta pieces on the table. He rose, stooped and gaunt, and, with Alan at his side, moved towards the door.

"*Adios, señores,*" he said to the men at the billiards table.

Only a baldish man in a cream suit answered. Stooping to squint at a screwback cannon, he murmured, barely audibly: "*Adios,* Señor Whisky."

Cactus Jack had quick ears. His calloused hand shot out and clamped on the man's shirt-front. He jerked the man upright, wrenched him close, held him straining on tiptoe, and thrust his long moustache and scimitar nose into the man's face. "I said '*adios, señores,*'" said Cactus Jack evilly.

"*Adios,*" said the billiards-player, in haste, "*adios,* Colonel Jackson."

"*Adios,* Señor Ibañez," said Cactus Jack. He loosed the man, moved on to the door. The man stared after him venomously, jerking his tie straight.

Alan was conscious of a tension in his own muscles, a quickening of his pulse, such as he hadn't known for years. It was a good feeling.

"That's Ibañez, Al, feller I told you about," said Cactus Jack, outside. "Never tolerate no witticisms from them little crooks." He dropped a heavy hand on Alan's shoulder. "Now I tell you. You come to my shack tonight an' I'll have all the information for you about the schooner." He winked. "*Hasta luego.*"

HANDS clasped under his wiry, blond head, Alan lay lengthily on his bed, watching Yolande. She sat before the mirror, using also a handmirror and wielding a hairbrush, moving her tawny head about to focus critical blue eyes on her reflection. Except for some incidental frivolities in lilac nylon, she looked, in the shaded light, all over gold.

"You're very quiet," said Yolande, busy with her eyebrow pencil.

"Just thinking," said Alan. The mere act of looking at Yolande, so dainty, so joyous, seemed to inhibit his ability to suggest that they sell up everything, and buy a schooner.

He said suddenly: "Yolande, what do you really want from life?"

She glanced at him, smiling, over her shoulder. Her lips lightly shaped a kiss. "You," she said.

Nothing could have shaken him more. He settled down to consider the situation again.

"Seriously," he said, "in the sense of the bill we each of us present to life according to our temperaments. Life presents a bill to us, what it requires of *us*. We present a bill to life, what we hope for from *it*. Fair enough. Well, now, in your bill, what would you put first, quite honestly?"

"Why, you," said Yolande simply, as she unscrewed her lipstick. "Oh, and. . . ."

"Yes?" Alan said, tense with the hope that his own restlessness might have kindled some longing in her.

"If our travel allowance holds out, and you think the Customs wouldn't be mean," said Yolande, "I'd put down for that Mallorquin amphora, the antique bowl we saw over at Palma. It's the very thing we need at home, to brighten up that dark corner of the hall."

Yolande leaned forward to the mirror, to use her lipstick. "What would you put first in *your* bill, Alan?"

He said: "Eh? Oh, well, of course, I'd put you first."

"So I should hope, indeed," said Yolande, and she glanced at her watch. "Darling, I really think you ought to pull yourself together, now, and get dressed. Carlos is coming to dinner."

Later, after dinner, he excused himself to Yolande and Carlos; he said he wanted see a fisherman about the chances of a day's outing. He headed for Cactus Jack's shanty. It was a long walk up the steep track. He paused for a moment to get his breath and mop his palms. And then, in the shadow outside the shanty, he saw the crouching figure of a man. A second shadow followed.

Alan felt a sudden, exultant excitement. Quietly, he moved on up the track. Inside the

Cactus Jack had quick ears. His calloused hand shot out and jerked the man upright

shanty, Cactus Jack sat in a cane chair under the light, rolling a cigarette. Crouched low against the bank, watching Cactus Jack, two men made a blur of black shadow. Alan stole up silently. He slid his hands into the pockets of his jacket. He thrust the pockets forward suggestively, let out a sudden, harsh shout.

"*Arriba los manos!*"

The effect was electric. The men's hands shot up. Cactus Jack whipped from his chair, dived round the table. Only the top of his sombrero and the muzzle of his revolver at the alert remained visible. Alan kept his eyes on the men. "*Anda, anda!*" he ordered, and the scrambled hastily over the bank, into the radius of the light, keeping their hands raised. Alan followed. Cactus Jack emerged from behind the table.

"Thanks, Al," he said. "You come along just right. Here, you watch 'em while I find some cord." He handed Alan his revolver, and went into the shanty.

The two men, blue-shirted, swarthy, sweating—neither of them was Ibañez, but both of them had been at the Tres Hermanos that morning—stared at Alan inimically. Cactus Jack soon returned with a length of cord, pulled down the men's arms, bound their wrists, shoved them ahead of him into the shanty. He winked at Alan, followed them in, drew the door shut.

A yell and a crash from inside the shanty brought Alan's head round sharply. The door remained closed. Slaps and yells came from inside, then a breathless gabble of voices, then silence.

FINALLY, the door opened. Cactus Jack emerged. He locked the door, pocketed the key, looked at Alan with close-set, pale blue eyes, tugging at his moustache. He moved to the table, splashed whisky into the glass, drank, and took out his tobacco and papers.

"You're in for a quarter, Al," he said, his back to Alan.

"A quarter of what?" Alan asked.

Cactus Jack said: "I just persuaded them two fellers in there to do a little talkin'. They admit there's a cargo bein' smuggled in tonight, 2 a.m., a couple of mile up the coast, towards Deya. All right, Al?"

"What do you mean?" Alan said, frowning.

Cactus Jack winked. "This island's gettin' too warm for me, Al. Time I moved along. *I* need a stake. *You* need money for that schooner—yes, she can be bought, all right. Now, look, Al. I got some good local boys—rough diamonds, Al—that work in with me. I'll round 'em up and we'll jump Ibañez for this cargo."

"Why, you darned old ruffian," Alan said, staring at him. "You *are* a hijacker!"

Cactus Jack said evenly: "You know the old watchtower up on the hill, Deya side

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Wire-tapping gadgets seized by New York police. No phone is now safe

America gives the walls ears

by ROLAND WILD

Listening-in on phone calls or keeping a tab on what the neighbours are saying costs only a few dollars. Now the most private place is the street

NEW YORK

ON SALE HERE in New York is a little gadget that looks like a wallet, weighs only eight ounces, and costs thirty-five dollars. It opens up into headphones with a pair of needlepoint clips that bite into a telephone wire or into a wall. For the walls have ears, these days. The immense preoccupation of the human race with the private lives of others has been officially recognized. And the United States Government, the F.B.I., crime-busters, criminals and even business executives are busy tapping wires and walls for reasons innocent and otherwise.

When Judy Coplon, the American spy, was tried in New York, a Government agent, James J. Lynch, disclosed that he had spent six months—five days a week, eight hours a day—glued to a tapped phone. When Los Angeles police were trying again to get the goods on Micky Cohen the mobster, they installed listening apparatus in Cohen's home three months before he moved in, and kept a monitor on his casual conversation day and night for ninety days. And when, on the other side of the law, a girl called Helen Keller tried to induce her elderly lover to marry her, she used as persuader an interesting set of wire recordings that needed no disc-jockey's introduction.

The tapping of wires and the installing of "bugs" in private houses is big business in the United States. Its legality, denied by the Supreme Court in 1937, when the F.B.I. theoretically gave up its use, was confirmed by President Roosevelt in 1944 in a statement that "wire tapping should be used against non-citizens and traitors." The Attorney General now says the national emergency still exists, that tapping will be used against espionage, sabotage and kidnapping, and that the F.B.I. at any given moment has nearly 200 telephones under supervision.

With this lofty example before them, it is perhaps natural that enterprising citizens are more and more interested in the chatter next door. There is on the market a de luxe model monitor that can be aimed, through two thicknesses of wall, at a telephone instrument, and by radar will pick up a two-way conversation. One of New York's fanciest hotels has microphones hidden in the lobby furniture for the benefit of the eavesdropping house-detective. Police say they can pick up a conversation from a moving car or boat if it is within radio range—and after certain mechanical arrangements have been made. And when an expert was called in to check the President's private line to the Secretary of the Treasury, he found he was able to get a line on the future plans of the country within twelve hours.

The Dog Collar Mike

Fancier gadgets are tiny microphones that can be attached to the collar of a conniving dog trained to go to sleep at the victim's feet; a simple dialling recorder that registers the numbers fingered on a dial-phone; and a tape-recorder that switches itself on whenever conversation in a house begins. Mostly, the chit-chat collected is not highly interesting, but dope-peddlars, white slavers, spies and gangsters have all been confronted with their highly regrettable chatter in the courts. The longest known record was that of Micky Cohen's tedious verbal passages with his wife, filling 800 pages of transcript, and including Micky asking his dog fifty-seven times where it had pulled up some flowers. . . .

First, of course, you have to get your "bug" into the house. William J. Mellin, who has been tapping wires for the United States Government for forty years, usually walked in as a telephone repair man, though the big telephone companies have always refused to co-operate with tappers, holding that it is an infringement of the privacy of their subscribers. Once, he arranged for an hotel switchboard to give faulty service for an entire week to one subscriber, to provide the excuse for his visit to install the "bug." Hollywood police walked into a suspect's house in broad daylight, disguised as workmen, and laid a tapping wire in a trench that they dug from the house to a listening post. The neighbours lent them a shovel.

Then there is J. Arthur Vaus, a chubby sound engineer of Los Angeles who started life as a choir-boy and became interested in electronics, and especially in their application to other people's conversation. Police were interested in the telephone conversations of a lady with too many friends—both male and female. Arthur Vaus burgled the basement, hooked up his equipment to a terminal, and led the wire out to a police car. The first call intercepted was a shocker; it was to the vice department of the police department, insisting on a little better service and protection.

Murder Talk Overheard

It was a "bug" that obtained for the police three vital records of conversations in the home of Micky Cohen, in the course of which he had discussed huge gambling deals, the latest gang-war murder, and the whole set-up of Hollywood's lurid crime history. This was red-hot material, though not at the time acceptable by the courts. A Grand Jury, however, insisted on hearing the records, and there began a comedy of confusion in which it transpired that newspapers, sundry agents, and even Micky Cohen himself had bootlegged copies of the recording before one could be obtained for the Grand Jury. There was big money in such interesting verbatim records of idle conversation, and all over town people were saying: "I wish I hadn't said that."

Defences Against Tapping

Arthur Vaus, being an expert, also deals in the defences against wire-tapping. He has been approached by political adventurers to install apparatus in rival offices, in government bureaux, and even in the office of the mayor. These lucrative offers he has, however, refused, but he did undertake the work of inspecting Cohen's mansion for a suspected "bug," and suggested an elaborate radar system of warning after Micky had been bombed. Micky had the most burglar-proof house in the country—but he never found the tiny microphone near his telephone.

The result of Arthur Vaus's revelations was a clean-up of language on city telephones, and even an aversion to telephoning at all. Political figures suddenly became outdoor boys, and liked to conduct their more vital discussions on the street corner.

There is no telephone that cannot be tapped, the experts say, though they have tried devices such as running the wire through gas-filled tubes that will show a leak when perforated. The only security is probably the distorting machine used on transatlantic wires, which scrambles syllables for the journey under the sea and unscrambles them at the receiving end. But even then there might be a tapper with an unscrambler.

For more innocent purposes, publicity men have hidden microphones at exhibition stands to catch the comments of the public, and theatre managers have caught the off-record comments of critics at first nights. In big plants, microphones have been used to catch the first whisper of strike agitators, and big stores, on the watch for theft, have not been above an interest in the shop-talk of their employees.

This kind of espionage might be legal, but half the states in the Union still refuse to accept such evidence in court. This is held to be an infraction of the Fourth Amendment of the Constitution which guarantees the freedom of speech of the individual, and the Federal Communications Act deemed it illegal to "accept and divulge" what went over a wire.

Set-up Looks Innocent

William Mellin, the Government expert, needs considerable equipment when he goes into a house to lay a tapping wire. Besides drills, soldering irons, pliers, voltmeters, cords and other electrical equipment, he takes hundreds of different-sized and coloured screws and tacks, tape in several colours, and a hand vacuum cleaner and dust bag. For it is a point of pride with him that he leaves the place as clean as when he found it; not entirely for the benefit of the housemaid, but because his finished work must appear as if nothing has been added to the innocent set-up.

So Mr. Mellin collects every shred of plaster and dust with his vacuum, checks the new screws in the back of the wall, and finally polishes the telephone instrument with a duster. There is a finesse even about putting in a "bug."

THE END

The bullet slammed Eakins back against the wall. But behind MacGregor, Stackham was rising to his feet—and in his hand was a flat automatic

MacGregor's Last Battle

by ALISTAIR SCOBIE

ILLUSTRATED BY ZELINSKI

Justice had to be done, but this was no affair for police. For MacGregor murder was personal

THE TIME WAS midnight. Over the high warehouses of the Pool of London a young moon was playing tag with scurrying wisps of cloud, and the cranes and ships took on a new, pure beauty.

At Wapping Wall, where the Bennison Export Company and the Patelan Fur Warehouse shared a wharf, two old men sat in a wooden hut on the dockside. They were as different as old men can be. Pop Parsons, who guarded the Patelan premises, was a fat little Cockney with a face the shape and colour of a good blood orange, with all the gift-of-the-gab and quick repartee of his race. Daniel Khartoum MacGregor, born sixty-five years before in a sleepy little glen near Ben Nevis, was imposing as only an ex-sergeant-major of the Highland Division can become.

The conversation turned to their jobs, as it usually did, and Pop declared, as he always did declare:

"If I was to go in there," pointing to his warehouse, "and find some blighter pinching the furs, do you know what I'd say? I'd say, 'Help yourself, my old matey!' Furs for a lot of rich blasted women and us with a few quid a week to keep the wolf from the door!"

"You're havering," MacGregor told him, "You are a sairvant, and in the words o' the guid book, you must act so as to desairve the words, 'Well done, thou good and faithful sairvant!'"

The argument passed the time, as this particular argument had often passed the time for them in the ten years they had sat on that wharf. But this night there was a difference.

Across the road from the warehouse was the school. Next to the school a mean little house where Dick Stackham lived. Stackham was a dock-rat, a petty thief who had just emerged from one of his customary visits to H.M. Penal Institutions. Inside he had made powerful friends, and now he stood at his first-floor window with Paul Zill and Ed Eakins and watched the moonlight on the Thames. That and the policeman who strolled by, trying the warehouse doors.

"O.K.," Paul said, "Blue-ink's gone. Get your gloves on, boys. Ed, got the drills? And the pliers? Good boy. Dick, nip down and get the truck. Don't drive over before I give you the high-sign."

Dick departed. Paul checked his gun and, slipping his gloves on, lit a cigar to steady his nerves.

They walked across the road casually, melted into the deep shadows by the Patelan Warehouse. They drilled quietly through the thin steel plate, then through the wood of the door. Using pliers, they forced the bolts back. Paul fanned his cigar ash from the pavement with his hat . . . no use in leaving any clue for the busies . . . then the door swung open and the two men went into the cloying smell of furs.

Weeks of watching from the handy Stackham residence had told them just where the best stuff was stored, and now they dragged furs to the door, which they had thoughtfully bolted behind them, until they had a great pile assembled. Then Paul Zill went out to the corner and waved for the truck.

At about the same time, Pop Parsons, noticing that MacGregor had dozed off, said to himself: "I'll just have a look round, then find the Thermos flask." It was time for tea.

Pop turned the corner and walked straight into Ed Eakins, hurrying to the truck with a load of furs.

For a moment they looked at one another, then Pop, all his scruples forgotten, grabbed for his police whistle. Eakins dropped the furs and gave Pop a straight right to the chin, but the old man, spry still, rolled with the punch and got the whistle to his lips. Ed pulled a stubby revolver from his pocket and fired carefully at the old man.

POP'S grip relaxed. The police whistle rolled from his hand and trickled along the gutter with a little tinkling sound. Daniel MacGregor, wakened from his doze, raced round the corner to see the truck backing away. He ran towards it and a shot zipped over his head, so he ducked for cover.

The truck got free, did a U-turn in the broad highway, roared off.

Daniel Khartoum MacGregor turned Pop Parsons over, then stood up. He looked for a second at the body of his friend and then stooped for the whistle, and sent blast after blast shrilling into the night.

When the patrol car arrived he was standing over the dead man muttering, "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a life for a life, if it be Thy Will, O Lord!"

"Come on, granddad," said the sergeant of police, "you'd better have a bit of a lay-down." There was only the smell of burnt cordite and the whiff of a good cigar in the air, and a gentle breeze from the river blew the last traces of the raid away, except for the looted warehouse and the bullets in the body of the old watchman. . . .

Two days later. A bright sunny morning found Mrs. Duncan MacGregor at the gas-stove, while her husband ate his breakfast and her seven-year-old son played with an engine one of his playmates had made for him by nailing a box on to a lump of wood.

A good Cockney, Mrs. MacGregor had got her name by marriage, and talked enough for two, as her taciturn Scottish husband sometimes told her.

"You see," she said, resuming a familiar topic, "your old dad ain't young any more. This business about Pop has proper upset him. I reckon he thinks it's his fault, just because he went to sleep, like. What I say is, he's served his country all his life and got his pension. There's no need for him to work now. Let him come and live quiet at home and I'll look after him, bless him."

"He'll no' do that," her husband told her.

The clump of boots on the stairs told her the old man was coming down, and she poured tea for him, put his bacon out with a little fried potato, the way he liked it.

Daniel Khartoum MacGregor pushed open the door and bade them good morning. His bulk seemed to fill the kitchen. He was a very tall man with wide, spare shoulders and his shiny blue serge hung on him. On his head was his bowler, a tall, ancient affair he wore indoors and out to conceal his baldness, and called his "Billycock." He was "The Sarnt-Major" to half dockland, and looked the part.

After a silent breakfast the old man lit his pipe and went into the tiny yard, to smoke. He sat on a wooden chair by the clothes-post and watched young Daniel playing trains for a moment or two.

In two days of asking questions he had discovered nothing. Except that a well-dressed man smoking a cigar and driving a blue American car had been seen in the district two or three

times and had once walked down by the side of the warehouse. He had learned that from the street-sweeper, Jackie Prentis, who had also told the police.

The well-dressed man and the blue car were also attested to by Joe Badenar, the milkman who took milk to the school. Joe had seen this man standing on the corner last Tuesday apparently waiting for someone, and had been struck by the slick cut of his clothes. That could lead anywhere or nowhere. The police were on the job, of course, and MacGregor had not spent ten years as a watchman without knowing their methods.

They would tap their informers, watch for the furs to reappear, the bullets would already be in the police laboratory — one day they might pounce. Or, thought old MacGregor, they might not.

He watched his grandson playing, smiled automatically at the boy, a sturdy youngster who would soon be off to school.

"Are you not late, Daniel?" asked the old man.

"No, Grampa."

"That's a fine wee engine. . . ." And he stopped. He stopped because he had remembered something. The man with the blue car had been smoking a cigar, the street-cleaner had said. And young Daniel MacGregor was towing round a piece of wood with a neat box nailed to it. The box was a very splendid, bright affair with a cedar lining and the legend: "Hambela Cuban Cigars. Twenty-five. From Selected Leaf."

The old man stared, remembering the smell of cigar smoke beside the warehouse that night. . . .

"Where did ye get the bonny wee box?"

"Fahnd it," said the boy.

"Where did ye find it?"

"I fahnd it in Lazy Dick's rubbish," said the boy, adding hastily, "but I didn't have to dig for it, Grampa, it was right on top."

"Here's a silver sixpence," said the old man, unaccountably, and strode down the garden to the tool shed and slammed the door.

THROUGHOUT the district Dick Stackham was known as Lazy Dick, simply because, when he was not in jail, he spent much of his time sitting with a racing paper on his doorstep letting the world go by.

Lazy Dick! A no-good thief whose house overlooked the warehouse! Why, his mind was getting soft in his old age, thought MacGregor. Why had he not thought at once of Lazy Dick? Probably because it was difficult to associate the petty thief who stole from barges with murder and big-scale warehouse-breaking.

Daniel Khartoum MacGregor was in the toolshed turning over cases and boxes left there to rot. At last he unearthed what he was after, a dusty trunk with his name on the lid, a tin trunk he had carried on his campaigns.

He rummaged in the trunk. Ah! He tugged out the holster with the .45 Army revolver in it, pulled the gun out, wiped off the thick, stiff grease on an old tunic.

With an expert hand he cocked the gun, and, arm extended, aimed at the toolshed door. He'd thrown a little high and to the right, he remembered, when he won the Army Silver Cup with it in 1920. But where to put it? He thought a minute, then clamped the revolver in the bench vice, found his son's hacksaw, and cut five inches off the barrel.

"Och, it looks the very hangman of a gun," he said. Then he unscrewed the butt-plates, sawed the butt down until there was just enough to wrap his big hand around. There. Cut the trigger guard off. Load. He found loose shells in a box in the trunk. Now where had Duncan put the insulating tape?

"Lord God forgive me," he said, as one would address a present and respected friend, "but the ways of man are deceitful and wicked." And Daniel Khartoum MacGregor went out to bring judgment to the unrighteous.

LAZY Dick Stackham sat in his frowsty little porch, the noon edition on his knee and a packet of cigarettes beside him. He wore a new suit.

Despite Paul Zill's warning about spending the money he had been paid, Dick could not resist the new suit. The money made things all

right with him, it gave him a satisfying feeling under his belt, kept his conscience from troubling him. If you had money you were on top of the world, murder or no murder—in fact, now that it looked as if they were getting clean away with it, Dick Stackham was almost proud to be a man who'd done "the big thing," if only by proxy! He looked up and saw the gaunt shape of the Sarnt-major approaching.

"Hallo, Sarnt-major. Never had a chance to speak to you since that business t'other night. I'm right sorry about your poor old mate."

"Aye," said MacGregor, "it's a foul thing. But the police say they've got a mannie in mind, and they'll be arresting him soon."

Stackham's heart turned over. All his cocksure confidence fled, as the old man had known it would. He went on talking, easily, letting a little undertone of annoyance creep into his voice.

"Ah want a wee chat wi' the laddie that was living wi' you. The one that keeps the big blue Yankee car."

Dick Stackham's face was a study in fear. But his voice was steady enough. "You got it wrong, old soldier," he said, "Ain't nobody with a car been living with me."

The old man wanted to cock back his right fist and smash it into Stackham's pasty face. Instead he grumbled a bit under his breath and said: "You don't have to try to kid me, you know, Dick. I saw the feller here with ma own two eyes. An' the reason I want to see him again is to settle a score. Ma wee grandson was playin' in the street an' along comes your pal in the Yank car and bowls the laddie over. Yon kind shouldn't be allowed to drive on a public highway."

Relief flooded over Stackham. He couldn't keep it out of his eyes. "You got it all wrong," he said again.

"Oh, no. I mean to tell the police. Ah'll get his licence, that's what ah'll do!"

Stackham thought a second. Then he said: "Matter of fact, that's Sid, a pal of mine. Sid don't own that car, see? He's just the chauffeur. You report him an' he'll lose his job and his licence. Got kids, Sid has. You wouldn't want to lose him his job? Suppose I was to give you a quid or two to get a present for the kid, eh?"

"How much?"

Stackham felt on more solid ground. "A tenner," he said, "how about that?"

"Right! A tenner. An' I want to speak to that mannie, to tell him just what ah think o' his driving."

"Suppose I got him here about seven? I'll bet you Sid's dead sorry about knocking down the kid."

"He'll be sorry before ah've finished wi' him."

Stackham waited until the tall Scot had vanished, then found two pennies and hurried to the call box opposite the corner pub, pressed his coins into the slot and dialled a West End number.

PAUL ZILL was smoking a cigar. He could just see the corner of the warehouse from his seat in Dick Stackham's front room. His well-polished shoes were on the table, his cigar between his gold-filled teeth. He was a small man, like a neat doll. Ed Eakins lounged with his back to the wall, and Dick Stackham sat twitching opposite Paul.

"I don't like it," Ed said.

Paul took the cigar out of his mouth. "Nobody likes it. I was a fool to use the big car, but I only drove down here twice to case the job. And, besides, I don't knock down kids. That's hooey. Look, this old bird's on to us. He ain't called copper, that's a cert, or they'd be in here like flies in a jam pot. No, he wants paying off."

"How much will we pay him?"

Zill replaced his cigar and smiled at Stackham. "We won't pay him —not in money. . . ."

As the clock struck seven the front door bell rang with a jangling little tinkle. Zill pulled his gun, checked the action, held it on his knees under the table. "Let him in," he said.

Stackham led Daniel MacGregor into the front room. The Scot had his hat in his hand, his craggy head gleaming, unexpectedly hairless, in the light from the single bulb.

"Hallo, Dad," Paul Zill said.

Zill took one foot from the table, crooked a chair, pushed it towards the old man. "Sit down and tell us your troubles."

Eakins came up behind MacGregor and ran his hands over the old man's clothes. "Clean," he said.

Zill brought the gun up. "Don't talk, Dad. No more use in talking. You know we did that job."

"I know, you swines," MacGregor said.

"Yes. An' you thought all you had to do was come here and squeeze us for a nice bit of cash. You've come to the wrong shop, Dad."

"What you going to do?" MacGregor asked.

"Do? Take you down the steps and put a slug through you. Poke you under a barge. They'll find you at high tide tomorrow. How d' you like the idea, Dad?"

"Fair enough," MacGregor told him, "but you won't do it."

"No?" Paul Zill knocked the ash off his cigar.

"No. The three of ye are no match for me. If ye had a Vickers gun you'd still be out o' your class. Yer not good enough, son."

Zill laughed, but it wasn't meant to be humorous. "Get up," he said, "The fun's over. Get up and walk in front of me to the door. Then over the road to the river. You can take it here or where you like, I couldn't care less." He motioned with the gun.

MacGregor looked at the ceiling and said in a sad voice: "Forgive them, Father, for they are but weak and sinful men. And forgive me, too, for what I must do. In Thy Name, Amen."

Then he shot Paul Zill carefully at point-blank range with the .45 he had taped inside his high bowler. Eakins's mouth dropped open as he faced the grim old man, then Eakins, who was no coward, grabbed for his stubby pistol. The second bullet from the .45 slammed him back against the wall.

MacGregor turned to find Stackham, chalk-white, rising to his feet by Zill's body, and in Stackham's hand was the flat automatic Zill had had no chance to use.

"Well, mannie," asked MacGregor, "why don't ye shoot it?"

"Damn you," Stackham managed to say, then squeezed the trigger. The bullet slammed into the wall above the old man's head, and MacGregor looked especially sad.

"Ye have a bad conscience, Dick," he said, steadied his own sawn-down gun, and fired carefully. . . . Then he emptied his gun into the ceiling, ripped the tape from it, wiped it clean and threw it on Eakins's body.

He walked out, his face grave and set. The thing was done. Let the police settle it as they liked.

As the first squad car hurtled past, its bell shrilling, old MacGregor stumbled home by the empty school. He was talking softly to himself, and two youths hurrying after the police car paused to laugh at him. Daniel Khartoum MacGregor did not hear them. He was having a long discussion with his Maker. THE END

Tapestry's kilted revolutionary

by EDWIN PACKER

Subjects were never modern; tapestries were always huge. Weaving only works of present-day artists, Ronald Cruickshank changed all that

FAME IS CREEPING UP on Ronald Cruickshank, master artist-weaver of the Edinburgh Tapestry Company. Soon this short, fifty-two year old Lowland Scot, who wears a Campbell Cawdor tartan kilt and has the sturdy legs to go with it, will find himself being talked about in the capitals of the world. For arrangements are being made to exhibit the firm's tapestries in Paris this summer and at the New York Museum of Art in October. Australia, South Africa and Argentina will probably see the exhibition in 1951.

These displays are the window dressing of a postwar development in tapestry weaving. For thirty years, under the private ownership of the fourth Marquis of Bute, the factory had been producing tapestries to decorate the walls of Mount Stuart, the Bute country house on the island of that name. Then, in 1946, a limited company was formed with several of the younger members of the Bute family as directors.

It was decided to weave only the work of contemporary artists. The traditional idea that tapestry must depict historical or allegorical subjects woven on a massive scale was abandoned. Cruickshank and his colleagues started working on smaller panels to meet twentieth-century requirements. Internationally known artists such as Frank Brangwyn, Henry Moore, Graham Sutherland, Julian Trevelyan, Louis Le Brocquy, Stanley Spencer and the late Jankel Adler studied tapestry and submitted designs suitable for the medium. In the past three years fourteen tapestries have come from the looms.

The Queen's Coat Of Arms

Today Ronald Cruickshank is working on a tapestry of the Queen's Coat of Arms recently commissioned by Her Majesty. The artist is Stephen Gooden, C.B.E., R.A., who submitted three preliminary sketches to the Queen before beginning the final version of the design. The panel will measure six feet by seven feet.

"There's always been a link between Royalty and tapestry," says Cruickshank. "Nero paid two million sesterces for Babylonian tapestry. Many kings of France had their own workshops, and in Britain the craft was established at Mortlake by King James the First." Another Royal patron is Princess Fahrunissa Zeid of Iraq, herself an artist, who commissioned a six-foot by four-foot panel, "Kentish Caverns," to be woven from one of her own designs.

Already this year the Arts Council has sponsored an exhibition of the tapestries in London. Critics were enthusiastic, but the highest praise came from French visitors. "That pleased me more than anything," says Cruickshank," for the French have been making fine tapestry without a break since the fourteenth century. They know what they're talking about."

Only One British Factory

The company is the only one of its kind in Britain today. Its factory is at Corstorphine, once an ancient village, now a suburb of Edinburgh. The district is heavy with history. Within the workshop grounds stands a sixteenth-century grey stone dovecote, owned by the National Trust, from which the company takes its trademark. Three dozen stray pigeons today nest within its walls, which once housed 1,060 birds—for it was built to provide Corstorphine Castle with a source of winter food. Under a sycamore tree ten yards from the dovecote the second Lord Forrester was stabbed to death in 1679 by his paramour, Christian Nimmo, wife of an Edinburgh merchant. She was beheaded at Edinburgh Cross.

But there is nothing historic about the single-storey tapestry factory itself which looks towards the distant Pentland Hills. Built in 1910, its grey stucco exterior harmonizes with the squat bungalows and houses of the neighbourhood. Behind the premises three acres of building land belonging to the company await development.

Inside, three artist-weavers and seven apprentices are at work. The Queen's tapestry is taking shape on a French loom dated 1763. Alongside it, on a smaller loom used by the French weavers in Soho in 1690, eighteen-year-old Alec Jack, now in the fourth year of his apprenticeship, is working on the background of a tapestry designed by Henry Moore. Cruickshank keeps an eye on Alec's progress and takes over when the figures in the foreground have to be built up.

The largest of the looms, a sixteen-footer, stands neglected in a corner of the adjoining studio. On it, awaiting completion, is the last of the Bute tapestries—an historical scene depicting Prince Charles Edward raising the standard at Glenfinnan in 1745. It was on the loom in 1939 when war caused the factory to close. "Another two years' work is needed to finish it," estimates Cruickshank, "but I don't know when we shall get round to it. We've so many contemporary designs waiting for loom space."

Cruickshank weaves a Henry Moore panel. Design is used on its side

Next to the big loom, three apprentices, Fred Mann, Archie Brennan and Ronald McVinnie, all in their third year, are working on a design of fighting cocks. Fifteen-year-old Harry Wright, who joined the firm three months ago, is winding wool from two spools on to a bobbin. Ian Inglish and Harry Whitmore are on the practice loom doing simple weaving.

"Feeling" The Pattern

Before starting on a new tapestry the artist-weavers like to become familiar with the design. "We do this," says Cruickshank, "by hanging the sketch on the wall for about six weeks. During that time we absorb the colour scheme and get the 'feel' of the pattern."

Then a loom is prepared. Vertical threads of undyed three-ply Cheviot wool are fastened between two rollers which run the whole length of the frame, one at the top and one at the bottom. These threads form a veil called the warp. For intricate work a fine warp of twelve or fourteen threads to the inch is employed instead of the customary ten.

"We are using a fine warp on the Royal tapestry," Cruickshank explains, "because it is a very detailed pattern. The heraldic motif is set against a background in which more than twenty species of flowers and fruits appear."

The tension on each thread of warp must be the same, otherwise the completed tapestry would hang badly. The artist-weaver has to sense this with his fingers. For this reason fastening the warp on the loom is a one-man job. The tension on each thread is estimated at 110 lb. It took a month to prepare the big loom for the Bute tapestries, and Ronald Cruickshank was ten days fastening the 1,296 threads of warp on the loom for the Queen's tapestry.

Near the top roller a bar divides the odd and even threads of the warp. This enables the weaver to pass the bobbin of coloured thread (called the weft) easily between the alternate strings of the warp, repeating the process in the reverse direction when he has reached the end of his colour line. When this has been done all the warp threads have a minute blob of weft in front of them. These dots of colour build up the pattern. The weaver works on the reverse side of the tapestry, watching the design take shape by looking through the warp threads into a mirror which faces the pattern side of the warp.

"All true tapestry weaving is done by hand," says Cruickshank, "although the word is often used for other processes. Work done on a power loom is not true tapestry, and for that matter the famous Bayeux tapestry is misnamed. It is not

Weavers work behind tapestry. Picture shows mirrors arranged so that design can be seen through threads

tapestry but embroidered needlework."

When the warp is ready on the loom the main outline of the design is traced on it. First a photograph of the sketch is enlarged to the size decided upon for the tapestry panel. A tracing is taken of the photograph and this is placed behind the threads of the warp. The main lines of the design are then marked on the threads with Indian ink. Further tracings are taken in greater detail when an intricate design is reached.

Assisting Cruickshank on the Queen's tapestry are artist-weavers Richard Gordon and John Louttit. The monograms of these three, together with the dovecote emblem of the firm, will be woven into a corner of the tapestry before it is completed.

Says dark, bespectacled, stubbly haired John Louttit as he traces on the warp the outline of the petals of an English rose: "The worst thing that can happen in this work is for Indian ink to be splashed on the tapestry already woven." He carefully covers the work already completed on the loom with a strip of cloth as he marks the warp with his pen. "You can't get Indian ink stains out," he adds, "so it's quite easy to ruin the work of months by dropping ink about. It's never happened here yet, touch wood."

Artist-weavers mix their own colours as an artist would his oils by combining two or three tones of wool on a bobbin. In weaving a jewel in the lion's crown on the coat of arms Cruickshank uses three bobbins. The weft of the first consists of three strands—two tones of red and blue. The second is made up of two tones of pink, and the third is dove-grey to give the pinpoint of light in the precious stone.

The Individual Stamp

The weaver is an artist also in his interpretation of the designer's purpose. As a musician interprets the composer's work in a particular style, so the work of each of the three artist-weavers at the Dovecote studios can be recognized by certain individual characteristics.

When the Bute tapestries were being woven wools of 360 shades were in use. So large a colour palette produced work which, though notable in other ways, lacked colour contrast. Cruickshank has reduced the number of wools to twenty-five, with the result that the contemporary panels have a liveliness lacking in the traditional tapestries.

It takes five years to make an artist-weaver, but plans are being laid to increase the period of apprenticeship to seven. Apprentices are paid twenty-five shillings at the start of their training, and have a rise of ten shillings every year. They attend the Edinburgh College of Art three or four evenings a week, and are encouraged to experiment with tapestry design.

Size and design control the number of hours spent in weaving a panel, and production costs are based on this. A simple pattern would cost about £10 per square foot to produce, but the Queen's Coat of Arms, an intricate pattern calling for the greatest skill in weaving, is costing at least £15 per square foot to produce.

"Anyone interested in art with a few hundred pounds to spend should consider tapestry as an investment," Cruickshank says. "You can buy a coloured print of an old master, but *we* never repeat a design and a tapestry panel cannot be imitated. We use Cheviot wools and fast dyes guaranteed by the British Colour Council. Our tapestries can withstand damp and strong sunlight. You can't say that for painting."

Cruickshank speaks with authority, for he is an expert in other branches of art. His home is hung with examples of his own work in oils, water colour and tempera. Upstairs on a loom he perfects new weaving techniques, working from his own designs. Those who have seen it agree that the tapestry, "The Phoenix," now on his private loom, will create a stir.

A design with strong verticals and a fairly simple colour scheme is well suited to tapestry. A panel on the loom is on its side so that vertical lines in the design are woven horizontally by the weft. Graham Sutherland's sketch of yellow birds on a violet ground, considered by many critics to be the most successful tapestry yet produced by the company, contains these essentials.

Some May Dislike It

But in Cruickshank's opinion a panel completed last year from a design by Jankel Adler will in time come to be recognized as a great tapestry. Called "Woman Seated on a Chair," it is a composition of abstract shapes which reveals the influence of Picasso on the artist.

"A man who does not know much about art will probably dislike it because it bears no resemblance to life," says Cruickshank defending his belief. "But an Eskimo taken to see the Cup Final could make the same criticism of the players, saying that people do not behave like that in everyday life. Yet to the student of form their antics mean something. So with modern art—it needs and repays study the same as football."

Artists receive fifteen per cent of the purchase price of the tapestry, and retain the copyright of the design. Panels which are commissioned—such as the Royal tapestry—are not subject to this agreement, the purchaser making his own arrangements with the artist.

One of the traditions of French tapestry weaving which has been maintained at the Dovecote studios is that a panel, when completed, must be cut down from the loom by a woman. The Queen's Coat of Arms will be finished in August when the Royal Family is usually in Scotland. The question of the year for Ronald Cruickshank and his fellow workers is—who will cut down the Queen's tapestry?

Weaving For Dollars

A pile of sketches on the office table are waiting for Cruickshank's consideration. "Those have been sent in from all over the country," he says. "Some of the artists have visited the studios to get an idea what shapes and colours are most suitable for tapestry before submiting a design." Works by Dom Robert—the Benedictine artist-monk of Buckfast Abbey—Frank Brangwyn ("The Last Supper"), Feliks Topolski, Michael Rothenstein, Vanessa Bell and Duncan Grant, among others, are ready for weaving as soon as a loom becomes empty.

One of Cruickshank's panels, based on a design by Sir Francis Rose, has already been sold in America and is on show in the Gertrude Stein Memorial Apartment. The autumn exhibition in New York is expected to contribute to Britain's dollar exports. Those three acres of land scheduled for development are going to be needed. THE END

STOLEN JOURNEY (7) by OLIVER PHILPOT

I'm all set to escape

Everything was ready now for the breakout. The tunnel had reached beyond the wire, my escape gear was all prepared. One last night in the prison-camp, and tomorrow—freedom

We had to risk it. We pushed boldly past the guard. Hidden in the horse was Mike—and the sand

OLIVER PHILPOT had worked underground on many escape tunnels during his captivity in Stalag Luft III, Germany. But never on one as bad as the Wooden Horse tunnel of Mike's and Bill's. It was more like a grave than a tunnel. It had no air, no light, no space to move about in, not even shoring boards to keep the sand from caving in. On his first digging trip down the tunnel it seemed as if the sand was sealing him in, burying him alive. He'd panicked badly, made up his mind to tell Mike and Bill that he must back out of the escape. But, returning to the surface, he changed his mind. After all it was a way of escaping from Stalag Luft III . . . if only they had the strength to carry on. Mike and Bill were already beginning to feel the strain of those long digging sessions underground. . . .

"DON'T BOTHER ABOUT THE HORSE, Bill. If the goons want you to go to hospital, you go." I was in the sick-bay hut, situated in the German administrative part of the camp. "Oh, I don't know Ollie—it's not serious," replied Bill. "But the horse is not very promising," I argued. "You'll get on some other tunnel when you get back."

Bill started to disagree, but a sentry who had been making muttering, almost whimpering signs of discomfort at my breaking the rules by talking, now advanced on us. We kept quiet. Bill in his pyjamas walked off in the sunshine to his sick-bay bed, and I was left with other p.o.w.s in the waiting-room for treatment. My excuse for coming over had been a razor-blade cut on my face which threatened to go septic.

Bill was not really very well. The Trojan Horse was taking its toll. We had got used to Bill and Mike coming back to the room utterly exhausted. They would both lie prone on their backs, too tired to plan or think much about the evening meal. Card games would be played riotously, arguments about our chances of being home by Christmas would be noisily debated. But throughout it all these two would keep a sort of glassy detachment, from which they would arouse themselves round about lights-out to sit together on a bottom bunk planning away in whispers, or mending bags for the tunnel.

Two Men In The Horse

I was not so tired. The underground work had all been done by them, not me, up to the time when I came in, and my dispersal task was not so onerous as the tunnel work of side-stroking that sand back. We had, however, tackled this particular digging problem.

Joe, the escape chief, came up to me when I got back from the sick-bay, and I told him of Bill being away. "And," he said, "I hear you've got a new method—something about two men in the horse at once?"

"That's true. It's a new method to speed up the digging," I answered. "How on earth does it work?" asked Joe.

I told him of how Bill and Mike had come to the conclusion that not only were they tired but the tunnel was almost at a standstill. Whoever went down to dig took so long going up and back dragging his sand that the shaft hardly went ahead at all. The vaulters on the surface were called upon for longer and longer sessions. They were becoming dispirited. They stubbed their toes on the little stumps of pine trees, and sometimes their physical condition deteriorated and they got boils.

So two had been taken out in the horse together, myself and Michael. It was an awful squash. When we arrived at the spot, I cramped my body into the end with Mike pressed close against me. He leaned forward and after a struggle opened the trap. He got

inside. I handed him an aluminium washing basin. There were two holes in the rim opposite each other and a four-strand rope made out of Red Cross string was tied to each hole. One end of the rope was then attached to Mike, the other end to me.

Mike disappeared up the tunnel and I got down into the vertical shaft. We had brought out no less than thirty-six bags. I spread these flat, and made a sort of couch of them in the den. Soon the rope which had been attached to my ankle gave a twitch. I pulled it; gradually it "gave," and I pulled harder and harder until the basin, filled with sand, slid down the last little slope into the den. I emptied it quickly, and then tugged at the other rope. After a slight hesitation it jerked taut. The basin, with a hollow metal scraping sound which was to become so familiar in the weeks that lay ahead, jerked off up into the blackness of the little shaft.

"M-m-m," said Joe, "that basin is certainly a time-saver. Thirty-six bags dug in one session, eh."

"Yes, it's a job knowing where to stack them."

"How many bags do you bring in?"

"None."

"What?"

"None on that occasion. But we work in a cycle. That is the digging session; we leave the thirty-six bags all in the vertical shaft—seal up, and go back as we came out, with no sand."

"And you pick it up later?"

"Yes, on another session—when only one man goes out. That's a lifting session. He comes in with twelve bags. Given fine weather, the whole cycle takes two days. We have an afternoon session. Dig thirty-six bags. Then an evening lifting session. Take in twelve bags. Next day two more lifting sessions, twelve bags each."

"I see—pretty ingenious. Well, let me know if you want anything from the committee." Joe sauntered away.

Portrait Of A Tunneller

I wondered how much of the picture I had given him. Unless you'd been in the tunnel it was difficult to visualize. And you could hardly ever describe the feeling you had down there. To crawl, not thirty-five or forty feet, but forty-five or fifty feet. To notice the footfalls of the circuit walkers behind you now. To use the tiny torch which the committee had loaned us occasionally (we couldn't use it much, it was too precious). To see those horrible little wisps of roots hanging from the roof, casting long, spidery shadows on the walls. To fill a basin and tug the string, and to give the basin a starting shove with your foot. To count the basins and wonder how long, how long to fill ten—a turning point; then fifteen and twenty, and finally, after an eternity, twenty-eight or twenty-nine basins, which was usually enough. To hear a muffled voice down the shaft: "Finished. Come back, come back."

Then to crawl thankfully back—almost wanting to run after two hours at the face. To identify each bit of the shaft as you passed. Soon now the wide bit where I made it rather too big. Then, some feet farther back, the stump on the right that seemed to stay at the face for days and days. A landmark now on the way to the face, you pat it and crawl on back to the straight uniform bit with the hanging roots, and after that the stretch where there was too much loose sand on the floor.

Then at last to feel that elation and lightness of spirit as you came to the final bit—possibly narrowest of all—the downward slope, where it would not be pitch-black any more—at least, not quite. And so finally to feel with your hands the security of Bill's wooden shoring. To arrive like a lizard at the crowded little den. To lie with head sticking out into it breathing the pure, fresh air. To make the last effort and take from Mike a number of filled bags and place them squashed up by your feet just inside the entrance of the tunnel. To go through the contortionist act of slithering out of the tunnel and the den, and up into the horse, thankfully to hear again all those cheerful voices of the vaulters a few feet away. To leave Mike to fill up the den with bags. Then suddenly to hear Bill warning us that a ferret was approaching. To crouch cramped up in the horse, not daring to move a muscle, wanting to stop breathing. To feel the utter relief when the alert was over.

I mused. What could these p.o.w.s not on the scheme really understand of it? We hadn't even got to the wire yet. But here was Bill treating the tunnel as if it was a sure success and refusing to go into hospital for an operation. He meant that, too.

Bill returned in a week or ten days, temporarily fixed up, it appeared, and wasted no time in getting back on to the horse scheme. With our new digging method in operation, our tunnel began to progress rapidly. Much of the credit was due also to Desmond, who volunteered to act as team manager for the vaulters. Although we had a few old faithfuls who were always ready to turn out to vault, much of our time was spent in collecting a team of vaulters big enough for each session. With Desmond in charge, this burden was taken off our shoulders. He was a large man with a cheery face and all we had to do was to tell him: "Digging session (about two and a half hours) at 2.15 p.m."; or "Lifting session after evening *Appell* (about thirty to forty minutes)." Men then arrived—nicely persuaded by Desmond, and ready and willing for work.

East compound of Stalag Luft III, Germany, where Philpot was imprisoned: (A) compound gate; (B) granary used as a landmark on the escape; (C) canteen where the vaulting horse was housed; (D) sentry box overlooking the tunnel; (E) approximate point of breakout

Crisis At Dusk

The horse scheme progressed, but not without an occasional crisis. The German ferrets were clearly suspicious about the canteen and were forever milling about it, and as the summer wore on they even formed the habit of sitting on the canteen steps, the ones up which we had to carry the horse.

On most nights they moved off after a while, but one evening a little ferret simply remained there on our line of retreat. The light was fading fast. If we were out of our huts for more than five minutes or so after the electric boundary lights went up we could be arrested or shot at. Clearly this was a crisis. We couldn't leave the horse out all night, because we had never formed the habit of doing so, and anyway a prowling watch-dog would smell the man inside.

"Mike, you're not to talk when we go in—there's a policeman on the steps," Bill said in a low but natural voice. "O.K.," came a muffled answer. Vaulting continued until the last possible moment.

"We'll have to risk it, Ollie," said Bill, reaching out an arm to help me over on a back somersault. "Yes—can't do anything else." Mike closed the trap. We lifted. Mike and the horse, with bags of sand inside, were marched right up to the German security n.c.o. He got up from the steps, very slowly, too slowly. We hoisted the horse up the steps, a few feet past him, with the ends of the bearer poles, upon one of which Mike was sitting, brushing the ferret's overalls as we passed. "*Bitte! Bitte!*" we said, just to be polite, having shoved him so brusquely to one side.

As the ferret still hung about near the steps Bill said, as we put the horse down, "I think we'll leave this here for a bit," loudly and pointedly. We pulled out the bearer poles. We picked up the medicine ball, walked outside, and threw it to one another. The ferret moved off. We got Mike out, who was saying, "What the devil's all that about? You chaps getting

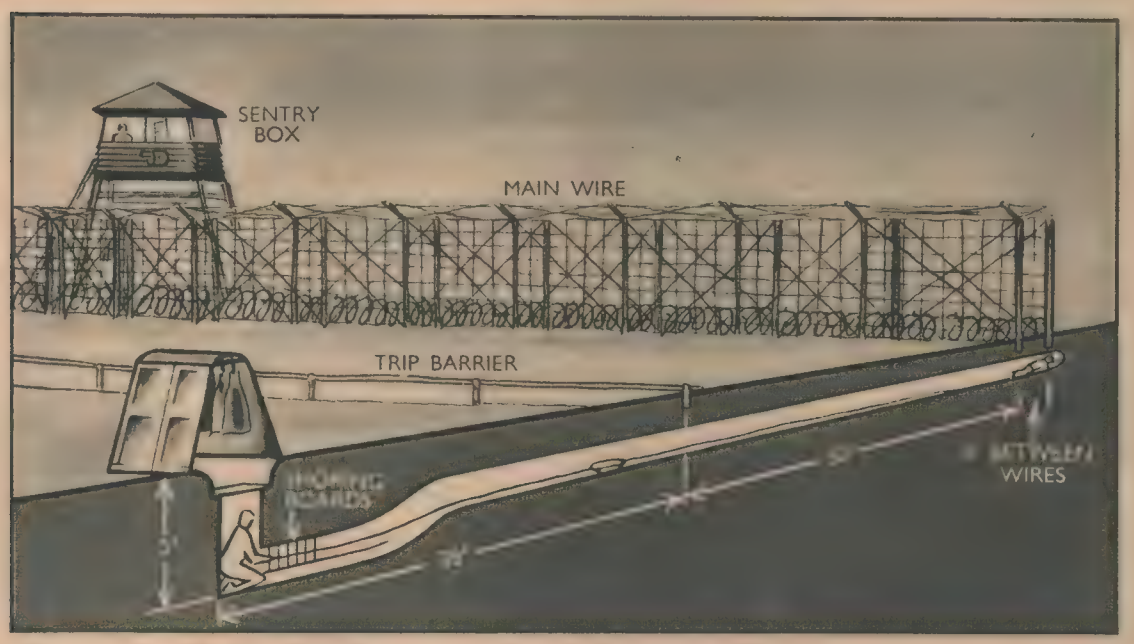

Diagram of the Wooden Horse tunnel shows man in vertical shaft hauling back basin of excavated sand from digger at the face. At the time of the breakout the tunnel was approximately 100 ft. long

windy?" We brushed him down at top speed. We got rid of the bags like lightning. And exactly as we emerged from the canteen building, the boundary lights came on. "Cutting it rather fine!" I gasped, as we hurried back to our hut.

One day, after a tiring vaulting session, the ever-helpful David asked: "When are you people planning to go?"

"Can't say," I said. Next black period, perhaps." We always consulted Bressey, the navigation man, to see when there was going to be a no-moon period.

"What is all this 'perhaps'—tunnels don't last forever, you know," David said. "I thought that this was going to be a moler anyway. The last moler took about thirty-three hours."

"Well, it was, David, but we don't want to bite off more than we can chew. Look how tired Lamont and Co. were when they got out," I said.

"That's all very well, but your object is to escape. It can't always be the next black period!" David's ginger beard waggled aggressively over his large body.

"No—you've got something there." Bill and Mike were always about to mole, and I held them back as much as I could.

"Where are you going?" David asked.

"Don't quite know yet. North perhaps."

"And the others?"

"We're not going together. We'd only argue. They were going to walk to Czechoslovakia—but they seem to be looking at railway maps now. I can't really say where they'll be off to."

A Progress Report

We were all feeling the strain. With us there were no afternoons off while camp experts, as at Schubin, went down our tunnel and installed more shoring, or electric light, or air-line; or when other shifts took over the digging. We did everything ourselves.

We began to wonder about the tunnel. Men kept asking us penetrating questions. How did we keep straight? How far were we? How deep? Common sense suggested that the tunnel was not crooked, as the basin did not snag any corners when towed back. Distance? Well, that was important—we couldn't pop up in the wire. And depth? It would be handy to know that, too, although guesswork suggested that we were running about one and a half to two and a half feet below the surface—we seemed to hit a consistent row of turfy roots—but who knew? We didn't, but decided to find out.

We went all scientific. Bill got a fire poker, a metal thing, from somewhere. We rehearsed a drill. Bill went down to the face. I held a string, which kept on breaking, tied on to his ankle. After plenty of "Did you pull?"—"No."—"Are you ready?"—"No," and so on, we became organized. I sat in the den under the horse, holding the string attached to Bill's ankle. Bill lay on his back at the end of the tunnel, the poker poised, ready to thrust it through the tunnel roof.

Mumbling Noises—Then Panic

"Ready!" I called to the vaulters. They stopped vaulting, got "tired," and draped themselves in negligent attitudes about the horse. At a signal from outside I tugged the string. It did not break. Presumably Bill was now shoving the poker upwards through the sandy soil. I waited . . . and waited. There were curious mumbling noises from the shaft. I could not attend to them and at the same time listen to whatever was going on above.

Suddenly I could feel, and hear, a panic. Mike's voice was the only steady one. "Down, Ollie, *down*," in emphatic tones. I tugged at the string. Nothing happened. I tugged again. Meanwhile the voices went on. "For God's sake get that bloody poker down! Get the thing down! Stop it waving!" And eventually Bill withdrew it and order was restored.

At the end of the session I asked what had happened. The vaulters had dutifully looked, with a fine casualness, towards the wire in the direction in which the tunnel was expected to go, i.e. at right angles to the fence. They saw nothing until one of the group—trying, as they all were, not to appear to be searching for anything—suddenly saw the steel shaft of the poker waving about in a totally unexpected part of the danger area between the trip barrier and the fence. The more they called to me for it to be withdrawn the more it waved about, the sunlight glinting on the metal, and positively beckoning the goon in the box to look at it; he had only to turn his head slightly. Just when the vaulters were almost crazy with anxiety Bill withdrew the poker and they all breathed again with relief.

We now knew everything. We were about half-way between the barrier and the wire. We had about one and a half to two feet of soil above us at that point, and the tunnel was not bent but started off thirty degrees to the left of its proper course. This caused eyebrows to be raised. How, asked the professionals, could a tunnel like this last when you not only started no less than thirty degrees out in direction, but waved pokers at the goons from it? As we slept that night we could almost hear their lugubrious voices saying, "It can't last, old boy, it can't last." We slept well, nevertheless.

During this time I changed my room, and went with friends into Hut 65, leaving Bill, Mike, Scottie, Hayseed and the others in 62.

I carried on in the horse scheme as usual.

In the evenings I would borrow Tommie's railway timetable, a handy little volume showing German railway times up to the end of September. It was very precious and was the only one in the camp. The experiences of the Schubin escapees had shown without doubt that the railway was the best way to travel on escape and I was determined to go that way.

The first thing was this. If the break was a quiet one, the local station (Sagan) would do. It was nicely placed on the railway system; it was also very close, only a quarter of a mile away, and there would be no need to plough along for about fifteen miles before reaching my station, as some of the Schubinites had done. But if the break was noisy and the alarm was up almost immediately, then Sagan Station was no good. I selected a little wayside station to the north-west, which might be safe in that event, and planned a forest trip to it, by foot, as an emergency arrangement.

Now where on the Baltic coast should I go to? Waring's escape tipped the balance in favour of Danzig; that and a map I had of the harbour with a bit of dock marked "Swedish ships here." True or false, up to date or obsolete, the information had a certain appeal. Danzig it should be. I worked out my route. I would first catch the seven o'clock evening express from Sagan to Berlin. The advantage of this was that I would rapidly be swept away from the vicinity of the camp. Then, to avoid going into Berlin—obviously too risky—I decided that I would get off the express at Frankfurt-am-Oder and catch a connection, the same night, on to Küstrin, a little way to the north. At Küstrin I would board the Berlin to Königsberg express which would take me north-eastward to Dirschau. That left only a short train trip into Danzig itself, and then—off to the docks and my Swedish ship. If all went well I would be in Danzig twelve hours after leaving the camp. Danzig in twelve hours! The thought was breath-taking.

Twenty-four Hours Weren't Enough

We were well under the wire and the camp now knew this to be a serious attempt. The twenty-four hours in the day and night simply were not enough. We became escape automatons. We woke up in the mornings, and immediately talked escape. We made our innumerable preparations—whereupon lunch was upon us. Then a horse job—we were all in fighting physical form now—and after the evening parade, another horse job. The evening meal followed, we would mend a few bags, and then drop off to heavy sleep. We had not a moment to spare. Everything must be perfectly prepared at the same moment, tunnel, clothes, documents, train routes, money, and so on. It was not long now.

The ships crossing the Baltic were reputed to have thorough searches at German ports by guards with dogs. In view of the fairly prolonged excursion into enemy dockland which seemed inevitable, I thought it wise to knock up an alternative identity—Jon Jörgensen, Norwegian business man, would obviously be out of place there. I decided to stick to the same name, Jon Jörgensen, but for the alternative identity he would be a Swede, a sailor from one of the ships. "Dean and Dawson," using the scantiest of data, made me quite a nice Swedish sailor's pass, with a photo of Scottie (which would have to be me) on it, and lists of ship voyages which I had recently made.

I needed a compass; something big and easy to read. Jerry, the pilot from Coventry, used some

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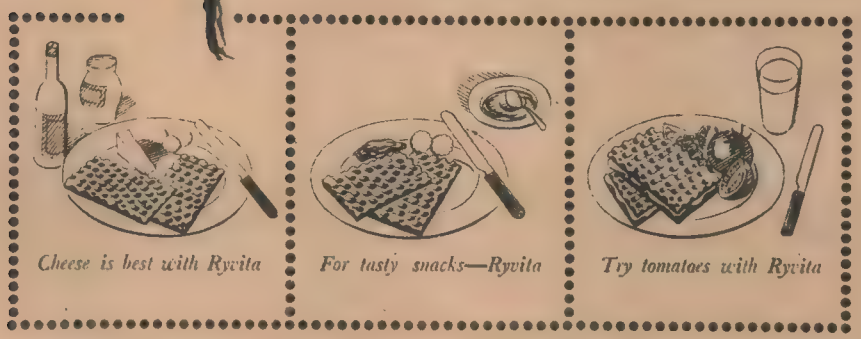

Cheese is best with Ryvita *For tasty snacks—Ryvita* *Try tomatoes with Ryvita*

RYVITA *THE OVEN-FRESH CRISPBREAD*

of the craft and cunning for which his city is famous and produced the best p.o.w. compass which I had ever seen. The bowl was a moulded gramophone record, say, four inches across, and it had a glass top. In the bowl stood an inverted gramophone needle. Two pieces of a razor blade had been magnetized by the camp electric light circuit, and had then been pasted on to the under side of a circular cardboard compass card. The card had, in the middle, a press-stud from an officer's uniform into which the gramophone needle fitted neatly, enabling the card to swing freely under the glass. The card markings were large and clear, with phosphorus added from watch faces.

A Genuine Civilian

Next, I concentrated on getting Jon Jörgensen's clothes together. The clothing officer, Ralph, fitted me up with a first-class pair of shoes, fresh out from England. Jon's jacket was of curious black material. A short little double-breasted jacket. Civilian buttons were put on it and appeared in serried ranks down the front as if to shout "genuine civilian." It had a patch under one arm, but was not too bad. To complete the suit a Fleet Air Arm pilot offered me a perfect pair of black trousers from his uniform. For headdress Ralph said I could have the camp's precious Anthony Eden homburg provided no one wanted it on escape before I did.

Collar and shirt were a toss-up. We had none of German manufacture. Jon would have to set his own standard and hope to brazen it through. I selected R.A.F. blue shirts and collars of the rather woolly type, not of smooth cotton. They lasted well, being slow to soil, and would give warmth if I slept out anywhere.

My tie was a new R.A.F. black one. Across it, running diagonally, a Fleet Air Arm pilot sewed stripes of white thread. It looked a grimly respectable tie for a business man, definitely civilian and fully appropriate for Jon.

The main thing about my R.A.F. greatcoat was to get a really smart set of buttons, and to have the shoulder pieces cleanly removed. I took my coat along to the room in Hut 66, occupied by the Czechs, one of whom promised to carry out the alterations on the night before we went.

Finally, Desmond, helpful as ever, lent me his small attaché case which was just the thing for Jon to carry. I had now made full arrangements for a reasonably smart outfit in which to go escaping, but I still had to get the clothes through the tunnel without making them filthy.

The Ghost Suits

I obtained a complete suit or two of Red Cross underclothing, thick vests with sleeves, and long, thick pants. One of these suits I could wear by pulling it right over my Jörgensen outfit, the other I could chop up and use to cover two separate parcels, one for my greatcoat and one for my suitcase and hat. But the colour, an appalling sort of off-white, was just the shade which would show up nicely in the arc lamps when I emerged. Dye was necessary, and dye was hard to obtain. I handed over this matter to Coxie, who managed to get hold of some smuggled black dye and the deed was done.

We made helmets out of the dyed underclothing to fit completely over our heads with three slits for eyes and mouth. We made pieces to go over our shoes, and we got some woolly gloves for our hands. The slightest opportunity for anything to glint, like whitish material or flesh, in the arc lamps, might mean a bullet. We tried out this ghost-like equipment on a p.o.w. bridge party one night. Consternation reigned at our eerie Ku-Klux-Klan appearance.

The contents of my case were, for an escaping p.o.w., distinctly unusual. Most escapers loaded themselves down with nutritious substances and pairs of socks, and so forth. I included primarily things to keep myself smart —a clean shirt, collars, handkerchiefs. If Jörgensen became a tramp his trip was just about over, I felt.

Next, and a long way below on the list in importance, was food. David had made, at my request, a lump of escaper's cake for me, calculated to last a man a week. It was covered up in a margarine wrapper of the Amada Margarine Works at Danzig. It was, officially, a sample of an experimental food which my company were working on, and which Jörgensen sincerely hoped would be of great benefit to the gallant German soldiers. Or at least, that is what he could say if questioned.

I felt that it would be as well to have my p.o.w. identity disc with me just in case I was recaptured. The favourite Gestapo trick was, I was told, to say to an escaper: "*Prove* that you are a p.o.w." But I did not want the disc to show, so I inserted it inside a piece of cardboard from a Red Cross parcel. To this I pasted a photo of my wife, and hung the lot round my neck. Then, unless a searcher felt the *weight* of the zinc identity disc, it was merely a sentimental reminder of my wife.

Meanwhile Bill and Mike were also busy collecting escape kit. They had decided to go as two French workers, one called "Marcel Levasseur" (Bill), the other "Michel Condé" (Mike). They, too, were going by train, but their plan was to make for Stettin.

Eve Of The Escape

And so the summer of 1943 slipped by and autumn came. Towards the end of October Bill and Mike and I had a discussion. We decided to break on Friday, October 29. This settled the dating of the documents, and on the 29th we had to go.

We finally decided to put one man in the tunnel and to seal him down before the evening *Appell*. His place on parade would have to be "cooked" somehow. Then the horse would come out in the evening with no less than three people in it, the third man to seal us all down and return in the horse to the canteen. A risky proceeding; could three men get in the horse? We should have to try.

On the night of the 28th, after lights out, I sat on the edge of Roger's bunk, the one below mine. "Have you got everything ready, are you all set for your *dienst?*" he whispered. "Yes, we're all set. Isn't it quiet tonight?" It was a still night; we both looked through the window across the compound and scanned the fence, very close to our proposed tunnel exit. A goon moved in his box near the spot.

"You'll go and see my wife, if you get back?" said Roger.

"Yes. *If* we make it. And—by the way, see that this gets to my wife if anything happens. If I make it, tear it up." I handed him a letter.

"Oh, you'll be all right—you'll make it. But I'll take it if you like."

"Good night."

"Good night."

The other forms on the beds turned over now and again in their sleep. The cups stood assembled for tea in the morning. The books lay about ready to be read. The clothes and pairs of shorts were discernible, ready to be worn in the morning during a stroll or in the afternoon for a game of tenniquoits. Never had Sagan appeared so safe and settled, so comfortable and desirable.

I wondered what Bill and Mike were thinking over in their hut.

NEXT WEEK: The tunnel breaks and I start the first lap of my stolen journey

Blithe spirit of the holiday tours

by DON EVERITT

The coach courier is everybody's friend. He watches romance blossom, helps staid spinsters to enjoy themselves—and deals with the bores

ONE DAY LAST YEAR a British coach was steadily climbing the steep, tortuous St. Gotthard Pass on the fifth day of a tour through Switzerland and Italy. At the back a nervy little woman who was travelling alone sat intently watching the road. Some distance up the pass there was a sharp bend with a precipitous drop on one side. As usual, the courier stepped out to guide his driver.

Suddenly there was a sharp scream. The driver braked hard and everyone stood up in alarm. The woman at the back had fainted for no apparent reason. The puzzled courier started to bring her round, and, as her eyes blinked open, she herself looked surprised. "I—I wondered where you'd gone," she stammered to him. "I thought you'd jumped over the edge."

Harold Seabrook-Smith, the stocky, forty-six year-old courier who recounts this story, adds: "Incidents as nerve-racking as that happen continually in this job—they're just *one* of the reasons why the courier's life is far from being the long holiday many people imagine it to be."

Coach touring has had a tremendous rise in popularity since the war. Continental traffic alone rose from 5,000 in 1939 to 50,000 last year. Dozens of new firms have sprung up. Harold's firm is carrying 2,200 people on its ten routes this year—more than four times its 1947 figure.

Pampered All The Way

His boss, Major P. G. Villiers-Stuart, explains the boom this way: "Train travel is both expensive and bad these days whereas we offer a *complete* holiday. We take the holiday-maker not just from station to station but from hotel to hotel. We pamper them right from waking up to bedtime. And that's just the treatment they want, for the majority of our customers are either middle-aged or elderly."

Obviously, much of a touring company's progress depends on the couriers who do the pampering. The major adds: "The success of a tour doesn't depend so much on the courier's geographical and historical knowledge of the route as it does on his ability to mould the party quickly into one happy family and keep them that way."

The courier's main worry comes from what Harold calls the difficult people. He classifies them as the shy, moody, snobbish, rude and boring types; those who are always wanting to stop the coach; and those who object unreasonably about open windows and smoking. Fortunately, there is seldom more than one of these people on the coach, although once Harold was cursed with three—mother, father and daughter.

This exchange between the husband and Harold at a café was typical. The man shouts across the tables: "I say, how long to dinner?" Harold tells him about two hours and asks why. "Oh, I wondered how much tea I could eat now and still leave enough room for a good dinner."

The wife's pet subject was the story of how she met and courted her husband: "There was I standing in this dance hall when in comes this great hulk—never seen him before—and I immediately said to myself, 'That's the man for me.' Well. . . ." The story was told at great length at least once to everyone else in the coach. Similarly, at the slightest pretext, the little girl would stand in the coach gangway and recite nursery rhymes. Harold shudders when he thinks of them.

Aid From The Passengers

His usual method of dealing with such people is simple; he just quietly asks the other passengers to put them in their place. "If I started giving orders," Harold points out, "it would only cause friction." But, occasionally, he does have to resort to more drastic methods. Last year one coach party was amazed to see two staid, snobbish, middle-aged spinsters turn quite merry after lunch on the second day out. Harold had coaxed the women into having a drink, and they had agreed, "provided it was something quite harmless." He had promptly bought them double pernods.

A colleague of Harold's recalls the case of the loud-mouthed, thick-skinned, business man whose behaviour was threatening to wreck a prewar North African tour. "It was a very hot day and this chap was boring us all to death, as usual. Suddenly, he said he just felt like a bottle of a particular brand of English beer and (hearty laughter) he bet we wished he was one. That gave me a wonderful opportunity. I went to the bar at the back of that coach and surprised him by producing a bottle. He made a great show of drinking it—but he kept quiet for days afterwards. Of course, I'd forgotten to tell him that it wouldn't be in very good condition. It had been jolted across Europe and North Africa for the past three months."

Throughout the tour Harold chats with the passengers collectively and individually, sparing a few extra moments with the shy person, "but not too long; the others soon start whispering, particularly if it's a woman." One elderly man refused to be drawn into conversation at all; he just sat and read continually through a tour which had cost him £100.

One of Harold's most important jobs is commentating and answering questions on points of interest along the route, such as "What's that mountain?" or "Where does that lane take you?" or "What does that statue commemorate?" He adds, quite seriously: "It's also imperative to know every toilet on your route."

The difficult passenger has his own particular brand of question. One man, for instance, found delight in annoying Harold with silly questions like "What are those small piles of gravel on the (mountain) roadside for?" A woman on a Dolomites tour specialized in teasers. It was some days before the courier—a colleague of Harold's named Pat O'Hara—uncovered her little game.

"I strolled down the coach and for once she was so intent on something on her knee that she didn't hide it as she had been doing whenever I approached. It was a Baedeker guide book. I leaned over her shoulder, pointed on the map and told her loudly and as icily as I could exactly where we were. She was as good as gold after that."

Harold says he seldom has complaints about food, "though there sometimes are a few dry comments when we strike a succession of places which believe—quite wrongly—that the Englishman's favourite dish is roast beef."

The courier's work is never done. Every night immediately after dinner Harold has to make out a detailed report for the London office. This calls for a little accountancy, for he has to settle all the bills during the tour. Even bedtime brings its problems. They range from the woman who objected to her bedroom wallpaper and demanded another room, to the young man who asked that his fiancée be next door to him. At an Innsbrück hotel last year Harold's

Seabrook-Smith says goodbye. On tour, shy people get special care

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firm booked six single rooms for a certain date. When he arrived with the party he found that three double rooms had been reserved. He had the unenviable task of pairing off the passengers.

"I explained to them that it was a hotel booking error completely beyond my control, but they refused to oblige. I offered to put screens between the twin beds. That wasn't good enough. I rang all the hotels in town and they were full. So after two hours' wrangling I told them to go to blazes and went out. When I got back they were all in bed — in respectable pairs."

Shopping As A Sideline

Harold's mother-father-nannie service also includes taking passengers shopping. This can pay off handsomely, for most shops give couriers a commission. Once he had to take a woman to buy a complete set of clothes—and to pay for them with the firm's cash. Her suitcase had been left at the previous hotel and the mistake wasn't noticed until the coach arrived at the next stopping-place, almost two hundred miles away over a frontier. (His present employers obviate this mistake by giving passengers uniform cases.)

Though Harold always gives detailed instructions to his passengers whenever he lets them out of his sight, someone regularly gets lost. One courier Harold heard of scoured Geneva in his coach for two hours before finding a middle-aged spinster wandering out of the town. Inwardly fuming because of certain trouble from the chefs at the hotel, the courier nevertheless had to be polite and understanding.

Some years ago one of Harold's colleagues lost a passenger by design. The man first started giving trouble by refusing to pay his drink bills and being late. Then, one afternoon in the coach, he pretended to cut the hair of the two women in front of him with the arms of his tortoiseshell spectacles. When he failed to board the coach on time the next morning they left without him.

Courier Got Left Behind

Pat O'Hara once got lost himself. He recalls: "We arrived at Paris on the last lap of a tour and soon after dinner I went to bed. My case hadn't been brought up to my room but I was so tired I just lay down in my underwear. The next morning I wasn't called. I awoke at nine. I dressed hurriedly and went downstairs. The coach had gone. I asked the manager what the devil they were playing at. He retorted that I had been called at least a dozen times and hadn't answered. They assumed I'd had a night out. We then found that I'd slept in the wrong room."

The courier frequently sees romance blossom on the coach. Customarily, it begins with the man asking the woman's neighbour to exchange seats. "Thereafter they have little interest in me or the tour," Harold says. Occasionally, some lonely woman will try to win the attentions of the courier himself. If she succeeds, his courier days are as good as over. Complaints always follow fraternization (or excessive drinking) and managements won't stand for either.

Towards the end of a tour the question of a little petty smuggling is invariably raised. Harold advises: "Declare everything." Less scrupulous drivers and couriers have themselves dabbled in smuggling. One crew, for instance, put scores of Swiss watches in a panel in the side of the coach; another rolled nylons inside the direction indicator. But, Harold adds, people don't always bring back dutiable souvenirs and presents. For the last two days of one trip the coach was baffled (and nauseated) by a foul smell which no one would own. Its cause was at last revealed at the Customs shed when an officer produced a large fish from a man's case. He was taking it home to stuff it.

No "Number 13" Seats

Prices of coach tours vary from as little as £15 for six days in Devon to £99 for a twenty-five day trip on the Continent. Harold's boss reckons that a tour starts to pay as soon as sixteen of the twenty-one seats have been filled. The specially designed £4,000 "motor-pullman saloons" which his firm uses are the last word in comfort. They are noise-, dust- and fume-proof and are fitted with carpets, radio, microphone, loudspeakers, air conditioning, temperature control, sun-filtering blinds, first-aid set—and an altimeter. Twice a day drivers spray the interiors with a deodorizing scent. There are no seats marked "13."

Harold Seabrook-Smith's courier experience dates only since the war. Before 1939 he was the manager of British Airways in Germany and Poland. His knowledge of Europe and his fluent French and German made him the ideal applicant for his present job. This season he is on one of the firm's longest routes, a twenty-five day, 3,500-mile trip linking the North European capitals — Brussels, Amsterdam, Luxembourg, Copenhagen, Stockholm and Oslo.

Salaries of coach couriers average about £7 a week. On top of that they usually get a £1 tip per passenger, commission on additional sightseeing excursions and shopping expeditions and free drinks at hotels in Spain, France and Italy. They also get an expense allowance and, of course, their accommodation and food is paid for.

Hotels Are Tested First

Harold's is one of the very few firms which employs its couriers through the winter. Mostly they are stood off at the end of the season and have to live on their savings or take a temporary job. Last winter Harold was busy arranging a new hush-hush tour which will be introduced next year. This involved visiting the countries concerned, getting accommodation ("I personally test hotels first") and planning the route ("We average about 150 miles a day").

When do couriers get *their* holidays? Says Harold blandly: "I shall take mine at the end of the season. My wife likes Continental coach touring." THE END

IN NEXT WEEK'S JOHN BULL . . .

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The woman called to Jean from the veranda. "I just remembered that name. Mrs. Boong. That's who he was always talking about." Jean laughed

A TOWN LIKE ALICE

by NEVIL SHUTE

ILLUSTRATED BY MACKINLAY

Part 5: A MAN CALLED JOE . . . He'd come half round the world to find Jean. How could I break the news?

JEAN PAGET HAD ONE DESIRE when she came into a fortune of £53,000. It was to return to Malaya to build a well for villagers who had taken care of her during the war.

But there was another, subconscious reason that took her back. While being marched by Japs across Malaya, with a party of other women and children, she had met Joe Harman, an Australian p.o.w. At another time, at another place, she might have fallen in love with Harman. As it was, a strong, brief friendship developed. Harman robbed the Japs to get necessary supplies for the women. But one theft—some prize chickens owned by Captain Sugamo, a Jap commandant—was traced, and Harman was publicly beaten and crucified.

Jean told me the story at my flat in London. It helped to explain the strange maturity I had noticed in this attractive, twenty-six year old girl. As family solicitor, I am trustee of the legacy left to her by her uncle. There was little I could say.

"You don't have to be sorry," she said. "It's a long time ago now—nearly six years. It's all over and done with now, and nearly forgotten."

But it was not over and done with. She returned to the village. The village got its well. And then, from one of the well-diggers, Jean heard a story that set her heart pounding, first with disbelief, and then with wild hope. The well-digger said: "Captain Sugamo had the Australian taken down that night; they pulled the nails out of his hands. He lived."

* * * *

IN Kuantan, in the evening of that day in July, 1942, a sergeant had come to Captain Sugamo in the District Commissioner's house, and had reported that the Australian was still alive. Captain Sugamo found this curious and interesting, and as there was still half an hour before his evening rice, he strolled down to the recreation ground to have a look.

The body still hung by its hands, facing the tree. Blood had drained from the blackened mess that was its back and had run down the legs to form a black pool on the ground, now dried and oxidized by the hot sun. A great mass of flies covered the body and the blood. But the man undoubtedly was still alive; when Captain Sugamo approached the face the eyes opened, and looked at him with recognition.

It is doubtful if the West can ever fully understand the working of a Japanese mind. When Captain Sugamo saw that the Australian recognized him from the threshold of death, he bowed reverently to the torn body, and said with complete sincerity, "Is there anything that I can get for you before you die?"

The ringer said distinctly, "You lousy brute. I'll have one of your black chickens and a bottle of beer."

Captain Sugamo stood looking at the wreck of the man nailed to the tree, and his face was completely expressionless. Presently he turned upon his heel and went back to his house. He called for his orderly as he went into the shade, and he told him to fetch a bottle of beer and a glass, but not to open the bottle.

The man protested that there was no beer. Captain Sugamo already knew that, but he sent his orderly to the town to visit all the Chinese eating houses to see if he could find a bottle of beer anywhere in Kuantan. In an hour the man came back; Captain Sugamo was sitting in exactly the same attitude as when he had gone out to find the beer. With considerable apprehension he informed his officer that there was no

beer in all Kuantan. He was dismissed, and went away gladly.

Death to Captain Sugamo was a ritual. There had been an element of holiness in his approach to the Australian, and having offered in the hearing of his men to implement the last wishes of his victim he was personally dedicated to see that those last wishes were provided. If a bottle of beer had been available he would have sacrificed one of his remaining black Leghorns and sent the cooked meat and the beer down to the dying body on the tree; he might even have carried the tray down himself. By doing so he would have set an example of chivalry and Bushido to the troops under his command. Unfortunately, it was impossible for him to provide the bottle of beer, and since the beer was missing and the soldier's dying wish could not be met in full, there was no point in sacrificing one of the remaining black Leghorns. He could not carry out his own part of the ritual; he could not show Bushido by granting the man's dying wish. Therefore, the Australian could not be allowed to die, or he himself would be disgraced.

He called for his sergeant. When the man came, he ordered him to take a party with a stretcher to the recreation ground. They were to pull the nails out and take the man down from the tree without injuring him any further, and put him face downwards on the stretcher, and take him to the hospital.

To Jean, the news that the Australian was still alive came like the opening of a door. She slipped away and went and sat in the shade of a casuarina tree at the head of the beach to consider this incredible fact. The sun glinted on the surf, and the beach was so white, the sea so blue, that it was almost ecstasy to look at them. She felt as if she had suddenly come out of a dark tunnel through which she had walked for six years. She tried to pray, but she had never been religious and she didn't know how to put what she was feeling into a prayer.

She went back that evening and spoke to Suleiman again about the matter, but neither he nor his sons could supply much further information. The Australian had been in the hospital at Kuantan for a long time, but how long they did not know. All he knew was that the Australian was sent down on a ship to Singapore to a prison camp, and he was then walking with two sticks. She could not find out from them when that was.

So she had to leave it, and she stayed on in Kuala Telang till the well and wash-house were completed. She had already started the carpenters upon the wash-house after long consultations with the elder women, and the concrete work was now completed in the shuttering, and drying out. On the day that water was reached at the bottom of the well the carpenters began to erect the posts for the atap house, and the well and the house were finished about the same time. Two days were spent in baling out the muddy water from the well till it ran clean, and then they had an opening ceremony when Jean washed her own sarong and all the women crowded into the wash-house laughing, and the men stood round in a tolerant circle at a distance, wondering if they had been quite wise to allow anything that made the women laugh so much.

On the next day she sent a telegram by runner to Kuala Rakit to be dispatched to Wilson-Hays asking him to send a jeep for her, and a day or two later it arrived. She left in a flurry of shy good wishes with some moisture in her eyes; she was going back to her own place and her own people, but she was leaving three years of her life behind her, and that is never a very easy thing to do.

She got back to the Residency at Kota Bharu after dark that night, too tired to eat. Mrs. Wilson-Hays sent her up a cup of tea and a little fruit to her bedroom, and she had a long, warm bath, putting off her native clothes for the last time. She lay on the bed in the cool, spacious room under the mosquito net, rested and growing sleepy, and what she thought about was Ringer Harman, and the red country he had told her of round Alice Springs, and euros, and wild horses.

She walked with Wilson-Hays in the garden of the Residency next morning after breakfast in the cool of the day. As they walked she told him about the Australian, because she could talk freely about that now. She told him what had happened. "His name was Joe Harman," she said, "and he came from a place near Alice Springs. I would like to get in touch with him again. What would be the best way?"

"You say he was an Australian?"

She nodded. "He used to work before the war on a cattle station called Wollara, near a place called Alice Springs. He said that they were keeping his job open for him there."

"If you've got that address," he observed, "I should write there. You're much more likely to find him that way than by going through official channels."

"I might do that," she said slowly. "I would like to see him again. You see, it was because of us that it all happened. . . ."

She flew on down to Kuantan next day. Someone must have told the crew of the aircraft about her, because the Malay stewardess came to her after half an hour and said, "We're just coming up to Kuala Telang, Miss Paget. Captain Philby wants to know if you would care to come forward to the cockpit and see it." So she went forward through the door and stood between the pilots; they brought the Dakota down to about 700 feet and circled the village; she could see the well and the new atap roof of the wash-house, and she could see the people standing gazing up at the machine, Fatimah and Zubeida and Mat Amin. Then they straightened up and flew on down the coast, and Kuala Telang was left behind.

Bowen, the District Commissioner, and his wife met her at the airstrip which is ten miles from the town of Kuantan; Wilson-Hays had sent them a signal that morning. They were a friendly, unsophisticated couple, and she had no difficulty in telling them a little about the Australian soldier who had been tortured, when they were sitting in the D.C.'s house. They said that Sister Frost was now in charge of the hospital, but it was doubtful if there was anybody now on the staff who was there in 1942. They drove down after tea to see Sister Frost.

She received them in the matron's room, very hygienic and smelling strongly of disinfectant. She was an Englishwoman about forty years of age. "There's nobody here now who was on the staff then," she said. "Nurses in a place like this—they're always leaving to get married. One of them still lives in town, though. Phyllis Williams. She married a Chinese, a man called Bun Tai Lin, who runs the cinema. You could try her."

Phyllis Williams—Mrs. Bun Tai Lin—lived in a rickety wooden house up the hill overlooking the harbour. They could not get the car to the house, but left it in the road and walked up a short lane littered with garbage. They found her at home, a merry-faced, brown woman with four children around her and evidently about to produce a fifth. She was glad to see them and took them into a shabby room.

She spoke very good English. "Oh yes, I remember that poor boy," she said. "Joe Harman, that was his name. I nursed him for three or four months—he *was* in a state when he came in. We none of us thought he'd live. But he got over it. He must have led a very healthy life, because his flesh healed wonderfully. He said that he was like a dog, he healed so well."

She turned to Jean. "Are you the lady that was leading the party of women and children from Panong?" she asked. "I thought you must be. Fancy you coming here again! You know, he was always wanting to know about you and your party, if anybody knew the way you'd gone. And of course, *we* didn't know, and with that Captain Sugamo in the mood he was, nobody was going to go round asking questions to find out."

She turned to Jean. "I forget your name?"

"Paget. Jean Paget."

The Eurasian looked puzzled. "That wasn't it. I wonder now, was he talking about someone different? I can't remember now what he called her, but it wasn't that. I thought it would have been you."

She could not tell them very much more than Jean knew already. The Australian had been sent down to a prison camp in Singapore as soon as he was fit to travel; they heard no more of him. They thought that he would make a good recovery in the end, though it would be years before the muscles of his back got back their strength if, indeed, they ever would. She knew no more than that.

They left presently, and Jean was half way down the steps when the woman called to them from the veranda. "I just remembered that name—Mrs. Boong. That's who he was always talking about, Mrs. Boong. Was that one of your party?"

Jean laughed, and called back to her, "That's what he used to call me!"

The woman was satisfied. "I thought it must have been you he was always talking about."

On the way back to the D.C.'s house in the car, they passed the recreation ground. There were tennis nets rigged and one or two couples playing; there was a white young man playing a brown girl. The tree still stood overlooking the courts, and underneath it a couple of Malay women sat exactly where the feet of the tortured man had hung, on ground that had been soaked in blood, and gossiped while their children played around. It all looked very peaceful in the evening light.

She went on to Singapore next day in the Dakota.

She wrote to me from there a couple of days later. It was a long letter, about eight pages long, written in ink smudged a little with the sweat that had formed on her hand as she wrote in that humid place. First she told me about the well-diggers and that Joe Harman was still alive. And then she went on:

"I've been puzzling over what I could do to to get in touch with him again. I must find out where he is living now, and if he's all right; I can't believe that he can be able to work as a stockrider after having been so terribly injured. I think he was a man who'd always fall upon his feet somehow if he was well enough, but I can't bear the thought that he might still be in hospital, perhaps, and likely to stay there for ever with his injuries.

"I did think of writing to him at this place Wollara that he told me about, the cattle station that he worked on, somewhere near Alice Springs. But thinking it over, if he can't work he can't be there, and I don't suppose I'd ever get any answer to a letter from a place like that, or not for ages anyway. And this brings me to what I wanted to tell you when I started this letter, Noel, and I hope it won't be too much of a shock. I'm going on to Australia from here.

"Don't think me absolutely crazy for doing this. The fare from here to Darwin costs sixty pounds by the Constellation, and you can get a bus from Darwin to Alice Springs; it takes two or three days but it ought to be much cheaper than flying. I thought I'd go to Alice Springs and get to this place Wollara and find out about him there; someone in that district is bound to know what happened to him and where he is now.

"I've been talking to a man in the Chartered Bank here in Raffles Place who is very helpful, and I've arranged with him to transfer my next month's money to the Bank of New South Wales in Alice Springs. Write to me there, Noel, because I know I'm going to feel a long way from home when I get there.

"I'm leaving here on Thursday by the Constellation, so I'll be in Australia somewhere by the time you get this letter. I have a feeling that I'm being a terrible nuisance to you, Noel, but I'll have an awful lot to tell you when I get back home. I don't think the trip home can take longer than three months at the outside, so I shall be home in England in time for Christmas at the very latest."

I sat there reading and re-reading this, bitterly disappointed. I had been making plans for entertainments for her when she came back, I suppose—in fact, I know I had been. Old men who lead a somewhat empty life get rather stupid over things like that.

It must have been about a week later that Harris, the clerk, came into my room and said: "Could you spare a few minutes for a stranger, sir?"

"What sort of stranger?" I inquired.

He said: "A man called Harman. He came about an hour ago without any appointment and asked to see you. I understand that it's something to do with Miss Paget."

For a moment, I just looked at him. Then I asked, "What sort of a man is he?"

He grinned broadly. "Some sort of

THE HUMAN MACHINE

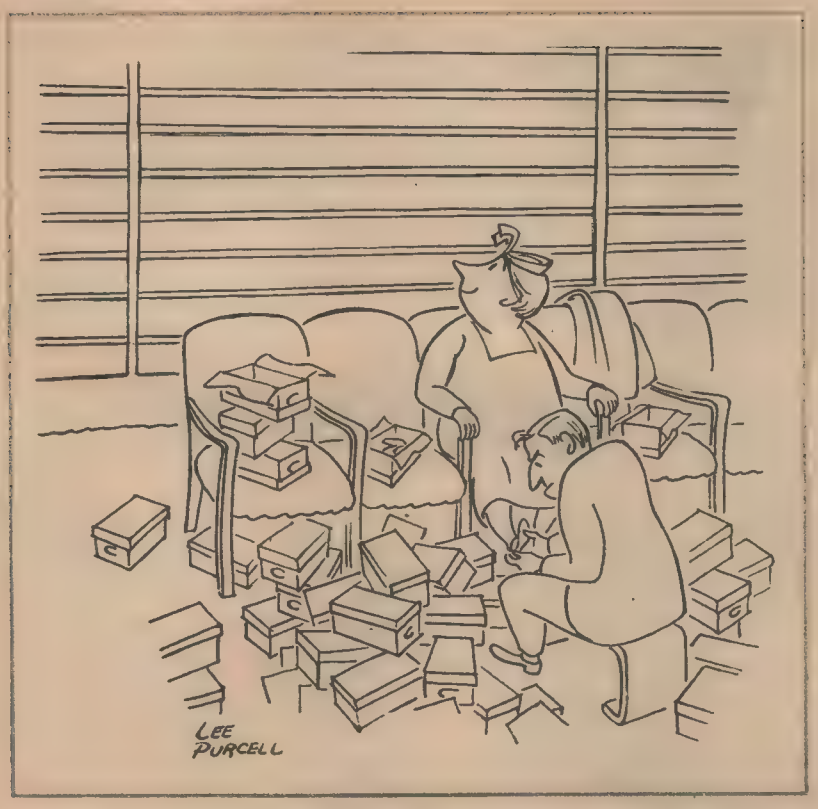
It's no use worrying

MOST of us poison our days, and often our nights as well, by living in the shadow of some disaster that never comes. It's rarely the misfortune we "foresee" that happens.

One can't avoid this habit altogether, but we can, and ought to try and cultivate a mind that thinks in a disciplined and sensible way.

For worrying is essentially a bad mental habit by which we let our minds dwell *persistently* on our troubles. It's a sure way to add to them.

by ROFFE THOMPSON



a colonial, I should think. Probably Australian. Looks an outdoor type."

"Is he a reasonable person?"

"Oh, I think so, sir. He's some sort of a countryman, I should say."

It was all beginning to fit in, and yet it was incredible that an Australian stockrider should have found his way to my office in Chancery Lane. "Is his name Joseph, by any chance?" I asked.

"You know him, do you, sir? Joe Harman. Shall I ask him to come up?"

I nodded. "I'll see him now." Harris went down to fetch him and I stood by my window looking out into the grey street, wondering what this visit meant and how it had come about, and how much of my client's business I could tell this man.

Harris showed him in and I turned from the window to meet him.

JOE HARMAN was a fair-haired man, about five feet ten in height. He was thickset but not fat; I judged him to be between thirty and thirty-five years old. His face was deeply tanned but his skin was clear; he had very bright blue eyes. He was not a handsome man, his face was too square and positive for that, but it was a simple and good-natured face. He walked towards me with a curious stiff gait.

I shook hands with him. "Mr. Harman?" I said. "My name is Strachan. Do you want to see me?" And as I spoke, I was unable to resist the temptation to look down at his hand. There was a huge scar on the back of it.

He said a little awkwardly: "I don't want to keep you long." He was ill at ease and obviously embarrassed.

"Not at all," I said. "Sit down, Mr. Harman, and tell me what I can do for you." I put him in the client's chair before my desk and gave him a cigarette. He pulled from his pocket a tin box of wax matches of a style that was strange to me and cracked one expertly with his thumbnail without burning himself. He was wearing a very ready-made suit, quite new, and an unusually ornamental tie for London.

"I was wondering if you could tell me about Miss Jean Paget," he said. "Where she lives, or anything like that."

I smiled. "Miss Paget is a client of mine, Mr. Harman," I said. "You evidently know that. But a client's business is entirely confidential, you know. Are you a friend of hers?"

The question seemed to embarrass him still further. "Sort of," he replied. "We met once in the war, in Malaya that was. I'll have to tell you who I am, of course. I'm a Queenslander. I run a station in the Gulf country." He spoke very slowly and deliberately, not from embarrassment but because that seemed to be his way. "Midhurst, Willstown, is the address."

I made a note upon my pad, and smiled at him again. "You're a long way from home, Mr. Harman," I said.

"Too right," he replied. "I don't know nobody in England except Miss Paget and a cobber I met in the prison camp who lives at a place called Gateshead in the north of England. I came here for a holiday, you might say, and I thought perhaps Miss Paget might be glad to know that I'm in England, but I don't know her address."

"Rather a long way to come for a holiday?" I observed.

He smiled a little sheepishly. "I struck it lucky. I won the Casket."

"The Casket?"

"The Golden Casket. Don't you have that here?"

I shook my head. "I'm afraid I've never heard of it."

"Oh my word," he said. "We couldn't get along without the Casket in Queensland. It's the State lottery that gets the money to build hospitals."

"I see," I said. "Did you win a prize in the lottery?"

"Oh my word," he repeated. "Did I win a prize? I won a thousand pounds—not English pounds, of course, Australian pounds, but it's a thousand pounds to us."

I reverted to the business in hand. "Tell me, Mr. Harman," I said, "how did you get to know that I was Miss Paget's solicitor?"

"She told me in Malaya when we met, she lived in Southampton," he said. "I didn't know any address, so I went there and stayed in a hotel, because I thought maybe she'd like to know I was in England. I never saw a city that had been bombed before—oh my word. Well, then I looked in the telephone book and asked a lot of people but I couldn't find out nothing except she had an aunt that lived in Wales at a place called Colwyn Bay. So then I went off to Colwyn Bay."

"You went right up there, did you?"

He nodded. "I think her aunt thought I was up to some crook game or other," he said simply. "She wouldn't tell me where she lived or anything. All she said was that you were her trustee, whatever that means. So I came here."

"When did you arrive in England?" I asked.

"Last Thursday. Five days ago."

"You landed at Southampton, did you?"

He shook his head. "I flew from Australia. You see, I can't afford to be away too long. We mustered in March this year on account of the late season and drove the stock down to Julia Creek in April—that's railhead, you know. I must be back at Midhurst by the end of October for getting in the stores and that before the wet begins at Christmas. So I thought that coming on this holiday I'd better fly."

Flying to England, I thought, must have made a considerable hole in his thousand pounds. "You came to London, then, and went straight down to Southampton?"

"That's right," he said.

"And from there you went up to North Wales. And from there you came here?"

"That's right."

I looked him in the eyes and smiled. "You must want to see Miss Paget very much."

He met my gaze. "I do."

I leaned back in my chair. "I've got a disappointment for you, I'm afraid, Mr. Harman. Miss Paget is abroad."

He stared down at his hat for a moment. Then he raised his head. "Is she far away?" he asked. "I mean, is it France or anything like that, where I could get to see her?"

I shook my head. "She's travelling in the East."

He said quietly. "I see."

I couldn't help liking and respecting this man. It was perfectly obvious that he had come twelve thousand miles or so mainly to find Jean Paget, and now he wasn't going to find her. It was bad luck, to say the least of it, and he was taking it well. I felt that I wanted a little time to consider this affair.

"The most that I can do for you," I said, "is to forward a letter. I can do that, if you care to write one, and I'll send it to her by air mail. But I'm afraid that you may have to wait a month or so for a reply."

HE brightened. "I'd like to do that. I never thought that after coming all this way I'd find that she'd gone walkabout." He thought for a minute. "What address should I put on the letter?"

"I can't give you my client's address, Mr. Harman," I said. "What I suggest that you should do is to write her a letter and bring it in to me here tomorrow morning. I will send it on with a short covering note explaining how it came into my hands. Then if she wants to see you she will get in touch with you herself."

"You don't think she'll want to see me?" he said heavily.

I smiled. "I didn't say anything of the sort, Mr. Harman. I'm quite sure that when she hears you've been in England looking for her she will write to you. What I'm saying is that I have her interests to consider, and I'm not going to give her address to anyone who comes into this office and cares to ask for it." I paused. "There's one thing that you'd better know," I said. "Miss Paget is a fairly wealthy woman."

He stared at me. "I never knew that she had money. She told me she was just a typist in an office."

"That's quite true," I said. "She inherited some money recently."

He was silent.

"Suppose you come back tomorrow morning, Mr. Harman," I said. I glanced at my engagement diary. "Say twelve o'clock tomorrow morning. Write her a letter saying whatever it is you want to say and bring it here then. I will forward it to her tomorrow evening."

"All right," he said. He got up and I got up with him. "Where are you staying, Mr. Harman?" I asked.

"At the Kingsway Palace Hotel."

"All right, Mr. Harman," I said. "I shall expect you tomorrow morning at twelve o'clock."

I spent most of that evening wondering if I had done the right thing in refusing Mr. Harman the address. I thought ruefully that Jean would have been very angry if she had known I had done such a thing, especially when she was looking for him all over Australia. At the same time, what I had done would not delay a letter from him reaching her, and there was no sense in putting all her cards upon the table for him to see just at present. One thing that puzzled me a little was, why had he suddenly awoken to the fact that he wanted to meet Jean Paget again, after six years? A question or two on that point seemed to be in order and I prepared a small interrogation for him when he came to see me with his letter.

AT twelve o'clock next morning he didn't turn up for his appointment. I waited in for him till one o'clock and then I went to lunch.

By three o'clock I was a little bit concerned. The initiative had passed into his hands. If he should vanish into thin air now and never come back to see me again, Jean Paget would be very cross with me and rightly so. Between clients I put in a telephone call to the Kingsway Palace Hotel and asked to speak to Mr. Joseph Harman. The answer was that Mr. Harman had gone out after breakfast and had left no message at the desk. I left one for him, asking him to ring me as soon as he came in.

He did not ring that day.

At half-past ten that night I rang the hotel again, but I was told that Mr. Harman was not in.

At eight o'clock next morning I rang again. They told me that Mr. Harman had not checked out and his luggage was still in his room, but that he had not slept there that night.

As soon as I got into the office I sent for Harris. I said: "I want you to try and find that man Harman. He's an Australian." I told him briefly what had happened. "I should try the hotel again and if you draw a blank, ring round the various police courts. I think I may have given him some rather unwelcome news, and it's quite possible he's been out on a blind."

He came back in a quarter of an hour. "You must have second sight, sir," he said. "He's coming up at Bow Street this morning, drunk and disorderly. They had him in the cooler for the night."

"He's a friend of Miss Paget's," I said. "Get along down to Bow Street, Harris, and make yourself known to him. Pay the fine if he hasn't got any money. Then give me a ring and if it's all in order take him in a taxi to my flat. I'll meet you there."

There was nothing on my desk that day that could not be postponed or handled by Lester so I left.

Harris arrived at the flat with Harman

Continued on page 27

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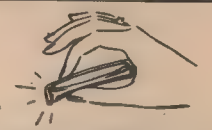

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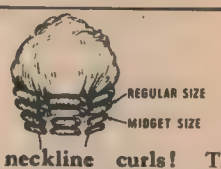

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A TOWN LIKE ALICE

Continued from page 25

half an hour later and the Australian looked a little bit the worse for wear. He was cheerful and sober after his night in the cells, but he had lost one shoe and he had lost his collar stud and his hat. I met him in the hall. "Morning, Mr. Harman," I said. "I thought perhaps you'd rather come round here and clean up. You'd better not go back to the hotel looking like that."

He looked me in the eyes. "I've been on the grog," he said.

"So I see. The water's hot for a bath if you want one, and there's a razor in the bathroom." I took him and showed him the geography of the house. "You can use this room." I looked him up and down, smiling. "I'll get you a clean shirt and collar. You can try a pair of my shoes; if they're too small I'll send out for a pair."

He wagged his head. "I dunno why you want to do this for me. I'll be all right."

"You'll be righter when you've had a bath and a shave," I said. "Miss Paget would never forgive me if I let a friend of hers go wandering about the streets like that."

Harris was waiting for me in the sitting-room. "Thanks, Harris," I said. "There was a fine, I suppose?"

"Forty shillings," he said. "I paid it."

I gave him the money. "He was cleaned out?"

"He's got four and fourpence half-penny," he replied. "He thinks he had about seventy pounds, but he's not sure."

"It doesn't seem to worry him."

He laughed. "I don't think it does. He seems quite cheerful over it."

I sent Harris back to the office and settled down to write a few letters while Harman was in the bath. He came into the sitting-room presently looking a bit sheepish, and again I noticed the curious, stiff gait with which he walked. "I dunno what to say," he said in his slow way. "Those jokers I was with got all the money I had on me so Mr. Harris had to pay the fine. But I got some more. I got a letter of credit that the bank in Brisbane gave me. I can get some money on that and pay him back."

"That's all right," I said. "Have you had any breakfast?"

"No."

"Want any?"

"Well, I dunno. Maybe I'll get something round at the hotel."

"You don't have to do that," I said. "My woman's here still; she'll get you some breakfast." I went out and organized this, and then I came back and found him standing by the window. "You didn't come back with that letter," I observed.

"I changed my mind," he said. "I'm going to give it away."

"Give it away?"

"That's right," he said. "I won't be writing any letter."

"That seems rather a pity," I said quietly.

"Maybe. I had a good long think about it, and I won't be writing any letter. I decided that. That's why I didn't come back."

"As you like," I said. "Perhaps you'd like to tell me a bit more about it when you've had some breakfast."

I left him to his breakfast and went on with my letters. My woman took it to the dining-room and he went in there to eat it; a quarter of an hour later he came back to me in the sitting-room.

"I'd better be getting along now," he said awkwardly. "Will it be all right if I come round later in the day and leave these shoes with the woman?"

I got up and offered him a cigarette.

OH, JOHNNY! *by TIM*

"Will you tell me a bit more about yourself before you go?" I asked. "You see, I shall be writing to Miss Paget in a day or two, and she's sure to want to know all about you."

He stared at me, cigarette in hand. "You're going to write and tell her I've been here?"

"Of course."

He stood silent for a moment, and then said in his slow Queensland way, "It would be better to forget about it, Mr. Strachan. Just don't say nothing at all."

I struck a match and lit his cigarette for him. "Is this because I told you about her inheritance?"

"You mean, the money?"

"Yes."

He grinned. "I wouldn't mind about her having money, same as any man. No, it's Willstown."

THAT was rather less intelligible than Greek to me, of course. I said: "Look, Joe, it won't hurt you to sit down for a few minutes and tell me one or two things." I called him Joe because I thought that it might loosen him up.

"I dunno as there's much to tell," he said sheepishly.

"Sit down, anyway." I thought for a moment, and then I said, "I'm right in thinking that you met Miss Paget first in the war?"

"That's right," he said.

"That was in Malaya, when you were both prisoners?"

"That's right."

"Some time in 1942?"

"That's right."

"And you've never met her since, nor written to her?"

"That's right."

"Well, what I don't understand is this," I said. "Why do you want to meet her now so very badly? After all, it's six years since you met her. Why the sudden urge to get in touch with her now?" It was still vaguely in my mind that he had somehow heard about her money.

He looked up at me, grinning. "I thought she was a married woman."

I stared at him. "I see. . . . When did you find out that she wasn't married?"

"I only found out this May. I met the pilot that had flown her out from some place in Malaya called Kota Bharu. At Julia Creek, that was."

HE had driven his fourteen hundred cattle down from Midhurst Station to Julia Creek with another hand and two Abo stockriders to help. He stayed at the Post Office Hotel in Julia Creek. And one evening two dapper men in uniform came into the bar and shouted a couple of rounds; these were the pilots of a Trans-Australian Air Line Dakota which had stopped there for the night with an oil leak in the starboard engine.

Joe Harman found himself next to the chief pilot. They fell into conversation about the war and soon discovered they had both served in Malaya.

"The funniest do I ever struck," said the chief pilot presently, "was a party of women and children that never got into a prison camp at all. They spent most of the war in a Malay village working in the paddy-fields."

Joe said quickly: "Where was that in Malaya? I met that party."

The pilot said, "It was somewhere between Kuantan and Kota Bharu. When we got back they were taken in trucks to Kota Bharu, and I flew them down to Singapore. All English they were, but they looked just like Malays. All the women were in native clothes and brown as anything."

Joe said: "Was there a Mrs. Paget with them then?" It was vastly important to him to hear if Jean had survived the war.

The pilot said: "There was a *Miss* Paget. She was the hell of a fine girl. She was their leader."

Joe said: "Mrs. A dark-haired girl, with a baby."

The pilot said: "That's right—a dark-haired girl. She had a little boy about four years old that she was looking after, but it wasn't hers. It belonged to one of the other women, one who died. I know that, because she was the only unmarried girl among the lot of them and she was their leader. Just a typist in Kuala Lumpur before the war. Miss Jean Paget."

Joe stared at him. "I thought she was a married woman."

"She wasn't married. I know she wasn't, because the Japs had taken all their wedding rings, so they had to be sorted out and that was quite easy, because they were all Mrs. So and So except this one girl, and she was Miss Jean Paget."

"That's right," the ringer said slowly. "Jean was her name."

He left the bar presently and went out to the veranda and stood looking up at the stars. Presently he left the pub and strolled towards the stockyards; he found a gate to lean upon and stood there for a long time in the night, thinking things over. He told me a little about what he had been thinking, that morning in my London flat.

"She was a bonza girl," he said simply. "If ever I got married it would have to be with somebody like her."

I smiled. "I see," I said. "That's why you came to England?"

"That's right," he said simply. "Right after I got back I went into Cairns one Wednesday with John Duffy on the Milk Run"—I found out later that he meant the weekly Dakota air mail service—"and so down to Brisbane. And from Brisbane I came here."

"What about the Golden Casket?" I inquired.

He said a little awkwardly: "I didn't tell you right about that. I *did* win the Casket, but not this year. I won it in 1946, the year after I got back to Queensland. I won a thousand pounds then, like I said."

"I see," I observed. "You hadn't spent it?"

He shook his head. "I was saving it in case some day I got to have a station of my own, or do a deal with cattle, or something."

"How much do you think you've got left now?"

He said: "There's five hundred pounds Australian money on the letter of credit. That's the lot. There's my pay as manager that goes into the bank at Willstown each month, of course."

I sat smoking for a time in silence, and I couldn't help being sorry for this man. It was ironical to think that Jean was at that moment busy looking for him in his own country. I did not feel that I was quite prepared to tell him that.

"I still don't quite understand why you've given up the idea of writing to Miss Paget," I said at last. "You said something about Willstown."

FOR a moment, he looked down, and then he said in his slow way: "I thought a lot about things after I left you, Mr. Strachan. Maybe I'd have done better to have done some thinking before ever I left Midhurst. I told you, I got no highfalutin ideas about not marrying a girl with money. So long as she was the right girl, I'd be tickled to death if she had money, same as any man. But there's more to it than that."

He paused again. "I come from the outback," he said slowly. "Running a cattle station is the only work I know, and it's where I like to be. I couldn't make out in any of the big cities, Brisbane or Sydney. I couldn't make out even in Cairns for very long and, anyway, there'd be no work there I could do. I never got a lot of schooling, living on a station like we did. I don't say that I won't make money. I can run a station better'n most ringers, and I seem to do all right with selling the stock, too. I'll hope to get a station of my own one day, and there's plenty of station owners finish up with fifty thousand pounds. But if I get that far, it'll be by staying in the outback and doing what I'm cut out for. And I tell you, Mr. Strachan, the outback is a crook place for a woman."

"In what way?" I asked quietly. We were really getting down to something now.

He smiled a little wryly. "Take

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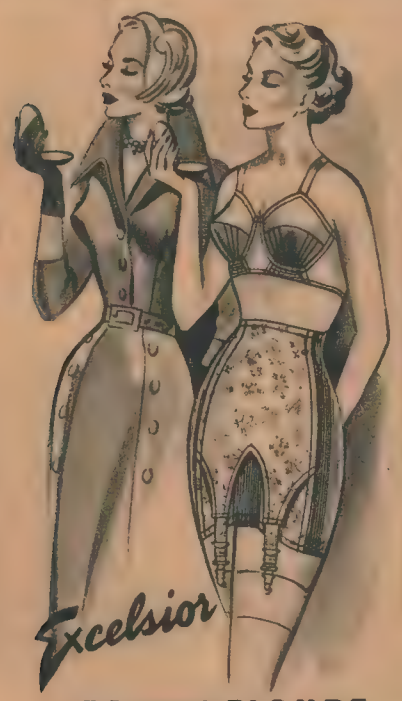

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Willstown, as an example. There's no radio station to listen to, only the short-wave stuff from Brisbane and that comes and goes with static. There's no shop where you can buy fruit or fresh vegetables. There's no fresh milk. There's no dress shop, only what a woman can get in Bill Duncan's store along with the dried peas and disinfectant and that. There's no ice-cream in Willstown. There's nowhere that a woman can buy a paper or a magazine or a book, and there's no doctor because we can't get one to come to Willstown. There's no telephone. There's no swimming-pool where a girl could sit around in a pretty bathing dress, although it can be hot there, oh my word. There's no other young women. I don't believe there's more'n five women in the district between the age of seventeen and forty; as soon as they're old enough to leave home they're off out of it, and down to the city. To get to Cairns to do a bit of shopping you can either fly, which costs money, or you can drive for four days in a jeep and after that you'll find the jeep needs a new set of tyres." He paused. "It's a grand country for a man to live and work in. But it's a crook place for a woman."

"I see," I said. "Are all the outback towns like that?"

He nodded. "Most of them. There's only one good one for a woman. Alice Springs. Alice is a bonza place, oh my word. A girl's got everything in Alice—two picture houses, shops for everything, fruit, ice-cream, fresh milk, Eddie Maclean's swimming-pool, plenty of girls and young married women in the place, and nice houses to live in. Alice is a bonza town," he said, "but that's the only one."

"Why is that?" I asked. "What makes Alice different from the others?"

He scratched his head. "I dunno," he said. "It's just that it's got bigger, I suppose."

I left that one. "What you mean is that if you got Miss Paget to agree to marry you, she wouldn't have a very happy life in Willstown."

He nodded. "That's right," he said, and there was pain in his eyes. "It all seemed sort of different when I met her in Malaya. You see, she was a prisoner and she had nothing and I hadn't a thing either, so there was a pair of us. When I got to know there was a chance she wouldn't be married I was so much in a hurry to get over here I didn't stop to think about the outback, or if I did I thought of her as someone who'd got nothing, so she'd be all right in Willstown. See what I mean?" He looked at me appealingly. "But then I come to England and I see Southampton and the sort of way people live there, bombed up although it is, and I been in London and I been in Colwyn Bay. Then when you told me she'd come into money I got thinking about how she would be living and the sort of things that she'd be used to and she wouldn't get in Willstown, and then I thought I'd acted a bit hasty. I never knew it to work for a girl to come straight out from England to the outback. And for a girl with money of her own, it'd be worse still." He paused and grinned at me. "So I went out on the grog."

In all the circumstances, it now seemed to me that he had taken a very reasonable line of action, but it was a pity it had cost him seventy pounds. "Look, Joe," I said. "We want to think about this thing a bit. I think I'll have to write and tell Miss Paget that I've met you. You see, she thought you were dead."

He stared at me. "Did she tell you about it? I mean—you knew about me, then?"

"Not very much," I said. "I know that you stole chickens for her, and the Japs nailed you up and beat you. She thought you died."

"I bloody nearly did," he said, grinning. "She told you that, did she?"

I nodded. "It's been a very deep grief to her," I said quietly. "You wouldn't want her to go on like that? You see, she thinks it was her fault."

"It wasn't her fault at all," he said in his slow way. "She told me not to stick my neck out, and I went and bought it. It wasn't her fault at all."

"I think you ought to write to her," I repeated.

There was a long pause.

"I dunno what in hell I'd say to her if I did," he muttered.

There was no point in going on agonizing about it. I got up. "Look, Joe," I said. "Take a bit of time to think it over. When have you got to be back in Australia?"

"I wouldn't be doing right by Mrs. Spears unless I get back on the station by the end of October," he said. "I don't want to serve her a crook deal."

"That gives you two and a half months," I said. "How much did your airline ticket cost you when you came here?"

"Three hundred and twenty-five pounds," he said.

"And you've got five hundred pounds left on your letter of credit."

"That's right."

"Do you want to go back by air or would you rather go by sea? I could find out about sea passages for you, if you like. I think it would cost about eighty pounds on a tramp steamer, but you'd have to leave pretty soon—within a fortnight, say."

He agreed to that, and I told him he could stay in the flat.

"You're welcome to use that spare room till you go, and it will be cheaper for you than living in the hotel."

"Wouldn't I be in your way?"

"Not in the least," I said. "I'm out most of the day, and I'd be very glad for you to stay here if you'd like to."

He agreed to that, too, and I asked him what he wanted most to see in England in his brief visit. He wanted to see No. 19 Acacia Road, Hammersmith, where his father had been born. And he wanted to see all he could of thoroughbred horses and cattle.

About Hammersmith, of course, there was no difficulty; I put him in a bus that afternoon, and went into my office to deal with my neglected work. Apart from the clients who came to see me, I had plenty to think about. Whether Jean Paget chose to marry this man when she met him was entirely her own affair, but it was quite a possibility that she would do so. Whatever one might think about the suitability of such a match, there was no denying that Joe Harman had some very solid virtues; he seemed to be hardworking, thrifty—if one excepts the great extravagance of flying half across the world to look for the girl he loved—and likely to make a success of his life; quite certainly he was a kind man who would make a good husband.

I got on to old Sir Dennis Frampton, who has a herd of pedigree Herefords at his place down by Taunton and told him about Joe Harman, and he very kindly invited him down for a couple of nights. Joe was delighted, and travelled down on the Sunday.

He had not much time left, because a ship of the Shaw Savill line was leaving on the following Friday morning for New Zealand and Australia, and I had managed to get him a cheap berth on that. He came back on the Wednesday full of what he had seen.

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"He's got a bonza herd there, oh my word," he said. "I learned more about raising up the quality of stock there in two days than I'd have learned in ten years in the Gulf country. Of course, you couldn't do the things that he does on a station like Midhurst, but I got plenty to think about."

After dinner I had a word with him about Miss Paget. "I shall write to her in a day or two and give her your address," I said. "I know that she'll be very sorry to have missed you, and I should think you'd find a letter from her waiting for you at Midhurst when you get there. In fact, I know you will, because I shall write air mail, and she's certain to write air mail to you."

He brightened considerably at the thought. "I don't think I'll write to her from here," he said. "If you're going to do that I'll wait till I hear from her. I'm glad I didn't meet her over here, in a way. It's probably all turning out for the best."

It was on the tip of my tongue to tell him then that she was in Australia, but I refrained. I had written to her in Alice Springs the day before Joe Harman had come to me, and I was expecting a letter from her any day now, because she used to write once a week, very regularly. If necessary, I could cable her to tell her his address in order that she might not leave Australia without seeing him, but there was no reason to lay all her cards before him at this stage.

I saw him off at the docks two days later, as I had seen Jean Paget a few months before. As I turned to go down the gangway he said gruffly: "Thank you for doing so much for me, Mr. Strachan. I'll be writing from Midhurst." And he shook my hand with a grip that made me wince, for all the injury his hand had suffered.

I turned to go down the gangway. "That's all right, Joe. You'll find a letter from Miss Paget when you get back home. You might even find more than that."

I had a reason for that last remark, because I had a letter from her in my pocket that had come by that day's post and it was postmarked Willstown.

To be continued next week

CRITICAL DAY

Continued from page 11

of the bay? We'll muster there one o'clock sharp, an' move down the groves to where this cargo's comin' in."

A few minutes later, Alan started down the path by which he had come. "You're in for a quarter, Al." A pulse hammered in his head. A felucca creeping inshore. A little knot of dark figures, led by Ibañez, waiting on the beach. Cactus Jack and his men creeping down through the groves. And always the hazard of the carabineros, the swarthy men who, round the shores of this island, shot first and questioned afterwards. It seemed to present itself to him, as he strode down through the darkling groves, as a kind of test. Go through with this tonight, and he'd have the bit between his teeth. No turning back. He'd buy the *Barbary Witch*.

It was already late. Most of the Costa Brava windows were dark. The hall was shadowy. He went upstairs with long, quiet strides to Room No. 8. Gently, he opened the door. He inserted the placatory countenance of a renegade husband. The room was dark; the window framed the stars. He said softly: "Darling?"

No answer. He switched on the light. The twin beds, with the sheets turned back and the mosquito-nets now draped, were smooth and empty.

He stared. He hadn't foreseen this. This had had no right to happen. He looked blankly at his watch. After midnight! He frowned. A step sounded in the corridor, and he looked out. It was Maria, the chambermaid. "Ah, Maria," said Alan, "do you know where the *señora* is?"

Maria looked hostile. She said, coldly: "The *señora* went out with Don Carlos Cajal in his car."

"With Don Carlos?" Alan said. "Do you know where they went?"

"How should I know?" said Maria. Her black eyes sparkled, angrily. "But this I will say, at the risk of impertinence—that there is not a Spanish gentleman living in this island who would permit his *señora* to be out unchaperoned with Don Carlos Cajal at this hour. The Señor Brown does not comprehend his responsibilities with a wife so young and attractive as the Señora Yolande. *Buenas noches!*"

She turned her back on the exposure of a feckless husband, and walked away, switching out the lights scornfully as she went. Alan paced the bedroom, his ears hot from the monstrous injustice of these strictures. But, of course, Maria was talking nonsense; the Spanish were notorious for the formality of their ideas on these matters. They didn't understand the free-and-easy camaraderie of an English girl like Yolande. But did Carlos understand it, either? That was the question.

Alan looked at his watch. He went to the window. The water reflected the quiet stars. He didn't glance at the *Barbary Witch*, tugging at her moorings. He was looking for a car's lights flickering along the road round the bay, but he saw no such lights. He lighted a cigarette. If he were to keep the rendezvous with Cactus Jack he ought to be on his way. He could leave a note to say he was going out with a fisherman. Only. . . .

He swallowed with a dry throat. He reconsulted his watch. He lighted a fresh cigarette from the stub of the old. He patrolled the room. He went repeatedly to the window, but saw no car lights. The night was an enigma of groves and bay and stars. A new thought uncoiled in his mind. Suppose Carlos had driven over towards Deya. Suppose Yolande and he got out of the car to walk down the beach and look at the water. They might, this very moment, be stumbling into Ibañez's men. Or some carabineros, mistaking them for smugglers, might be opening fire. . . .

His scalp tingled. His heart thumped. It would serve him right. He must have been out of his mind. Smugglers were a public menace. They crept about the groves. They feuded among themselves. They made any beach a death-trap to innocent bystanders. What had he been dreaming of? What insanity had got into him, to think of dragging Yolande round the world in a schooner probably eaten out with dry rot? If he worried himself sick about her now, how would he feel if he had her aboard a doubtful schooner and a gale got up?

He paced the room in deepening misery. He went to the window again. He stood listening intently—as though at any second he might hear, faint and far, from the direction of Deya, a sudden fusillade of shots.

Instead, he saw a flash of light. He stepped out on to the balcony, watching eagerly. It was a car's headlights. The lights flickered swiftly under the shoreside trees, swung round by the waterfront, slid towards the hotel. The car pulled up at the foot of the terrace steps. He raced downstairs, and pulled himself up to a casual saunter as he saw Yolande crossing the hall.

"Sorry to be so late, darling," she said. "You stayed so long with your fisherman that I let Carlos drive me out to some kind of a tavern he wanted me to see, where they have *flamenço* singing."

"Oh, well," said Alan. "I just wondered." But he put an arm about her as they went upstairs. "Did Carlos," he said, his blunt, brown face carefully impassive, "make a nuisance of himself at all?"

"Carlos?" Yolande said. She laughed. "He wouldn't dare. He knows I'm a happily married wife."

The hall clock chimed two as they went upstairs. Two o'clock was zero hour on Deya beach. Alan didn't even notice it. But later, lying awake, with Yolande's hand in his, between their two beds, he did recall a character called Cactus Jack, and wonder how he'd made out. Cactus Jack, somehow, seemed about as likely a contemporary figure as a stegosaurus; he was a fugitive from a museum.

"Yolande," said Alan, very quietly.

"Um?" said Yolande.

"How about selling up everything," Alan said, "buying that schooner out in the bay, and setting off round the world?"

"Are you serious?" said Yolande.

"Perfectly."

"All right, darling, if you really feel you must," said Yolande, "and if I can have that Mallorquin amphora in the cabin. When do we sail?"

He knew that she meant it, just as he always had known that that was what she would answer. That was the kind of a wife his was. He said: "One of these days, perhaps," and he raised her hand and touched it gently to his lips. "Know what that's for?" he said.

"What?" said Yolande.

"A receipt for a bill," said Alan. "Paid with love."

"Me, too," said Yolande contentedly. . . .

The window stood wide open to the stars. Light airs lifted the curtains. A cricket chirred on the terrace. Out in the glimmering bay, the schooner *Barbary Witch* rocked a little at her moorings, her bowsprit pointed to the harbour mouth. In the Hotel Costa Brava all was quiet. The critical day for the couple in Room 8 was over. They were asleep. THE END

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2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.
3. As entry-fee, enclose P.O. or stamps as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.
4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that results of this week's Contests in *Bulletin* and *Gazette* dated July 15 and in JOHN BULL dated July 22, also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

Add 2, 3 or 4 Words to any of these "EXAMPLES"

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the *Examples* below. To use an incomplete *Example*, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line—then make your *Bullet* as usual.

Mountaineer John
Death On The Road
Swarm Of Officials
When The Job's Done
Baffled And Bewildered
The Victims
A Long Time Ago
Count Your Blessings And
Heavenly
Might Come Off
Sitting Pretty
Domestic Storm
If It's Genuine
Mother's Precious
All Out
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Incomplete "Examples" —see instructions

With All Our.....
Couldn't.....It
.....Than Ever
Too Fond Of .....
"Whose ..... Is This?"
Made The Neighbours .....

NOTE.—You may enclose *Bullets* and Xword entries in same envelope covered by single P.O. for combined entry-fee. Mark envelope "COMBINED," top left-hand corner.

POST ENTRY

"Bullets" 1,737 (or Xword 689), "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.2 (Comp.)

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Who's next to see this glorious scenery? Already ten "John Bull" guests have visited lovely Interlaken

Continued from next column

ING," "CHISELLING." £5: S. C. Smith, 71 Underhill Road, London, S.E.22: NATURE'S WEALTH — INEXHAUSTIBLE? DESERTS AREN'T MIRAGES! For ten winners of £2 10s. see *"Bullets" Bulletin* dated June 10.

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Continued in previous column

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Across Clues **XWORD 689**

1. A dramatist owes much to those of
3. Some fellows don't like the idea of one, even if it's only temporary
5. Church service can easily be marred by
8. It's rough luck going to cinema advertising big picture only to find it this
9. Many such a girl doesn't get married after all
12. To some extent a man dons rose-coloured spectacles when he's this
14. It's a pretty good steeplechaser that takes this in effortless manner
15. A rake is just the sort of person to be this

Down Clues

2. Sergeant sees to it that his recruits do this as they should
4. You may occasionally strike this over boundary
6. Batsman with a big reputation can afford to
7. May well make child more careful crossing the road
10. When money is this to a waster, it soon disappears
11. Honest, hard-working folk deserve more than
13. One may sometimes be criticized as clumsy

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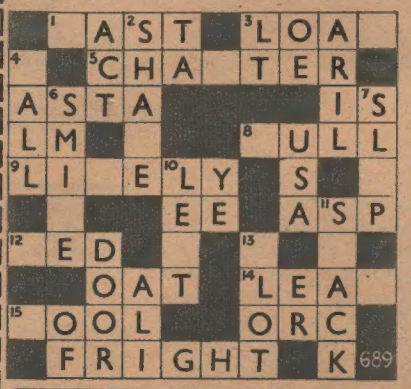

CLUE	EXTRA ANSWER	Total Fee
No.		6d.
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In adjudication, all Extra Answers will be read in combination with each other and with all Answers in your Square. Thus your completed Square with one extra Answer to *one* Clue will represent *two* full Squares (Entry-fee 6d.), Square with one extra Answer to *two* Clues will represent *four* full Squares (Entry-fee 1s.), and Square with one extra Answer to *three* Clues will represent *eight* full Squares (Entry-fee 2s.). Use ink, not pencil.

Single Square with 6d. P.O. or stamps covers dispatch to you of *Crossword Gazette* dated July 8.

Winner—sender of most meritorious set of Answers received—decided by Adjudication Committee on basis of aptness and accuracy. Ties divide. Entrants limited to one prize per Contest and to entry requiring not more than 4s. entry-fee. Signature indicates agreement to Rules.

FATHER'S WAY WITH THE NAUGHTY BOY

Continued from page 9

going on. "Nothing," said one, quickly passing something behind his back to the other. I confiscated it, a tin containing cigarette papers, tobacco and matches. "You've caused enough damn trouble with that," I said. I was too angry to trust myself near them, and they knew it.

That evening friends came. They suggested punishments from a thrashing to a box of strong cigars. I found myself defending the kids because they'd had a scare and learnt their lesson. "All children have to live through these phases," I said. "You know from the crazy things you did yourself."

Then the confessions started. A respectable married woman said: "We used to drop our penny as the tram conductor came up the stairs, pick it up quickly, and then grope around saying we'd lost it. We often got a free ride." Mother was questioning a little boy. "Have you been taking the sugar, son?" "No, Mummie," the lad said. As he spoke sugar fell out of his mouth. The lad was me. Bessie recalled a school chum who bought her a doll's needlework box. She'd joined the Salvation Army just before "Self Denial Week," and then spent the collection on her friends! "I can remember when my brother and I pinched Sexton Blakes," said a grave man with a cultured manner. "We'd run out of pocket money and we badly needed reading matter. Outside a newsagent's we spotted a notice 'London newspapers not yet arrived.' My brother went in and innocently asked for one of the dailies. I came in behind him and whipped a couple of boy's books under my coat while the shopkeeper's attention was distracted."

Big Family Curbs Itself

Fraud, theft, lying, receiving and planned shoplifting—and yet none of us had turned out criminal or seemed any the worse for it. Should children, then, be allowed to run absolutely wild, committing what crimes they like without discipline or punishment? Obviously not. They need freedom to develop, but not licence to go wrong. The question is, where do you draw the line? A Scottish headmaster with revolutionary ideas about his job gave me a clue. "Licence is freedom that goes too far and tramples on the other chap," he said. "In a large family it's curbed by the feeling of the majority."

One of the worst causes of youthful wrong-doing in large towns today, it seems to me, is that people are so crowded together that it's almost impossible *not* to trample on the other chap. Crowds and crime go together.

Bessie and I count ourselves lucky that we live on the border of town and country, not too far from the shops and within easy reach of the freedom and fresh air of green fields. But all the same, we have rules of behaviour for the boys. "If you make any kind of mess, clear it up yourself." The kids are always coming home with rough sticks that serve as anything from a cricket bat to a gun, but because of the danger to people and goods the rule is "No sticks indoors." Since one or two windows were broken—"No tennis balls in the back yard." And to save smashing up the home—"If you want to fight, go out in the meadow or on the straw." We try to avoid putting a complete stopper on anything, but aim to find a suitable place for it, whether it is reading the encyclopaedia or practising with a catapult.

Like most kids, ours seem to *like* rules. They are sticklers for ritual. We try to make obedience easy, and

dodge if we can any direct opposition of wills. There is nothing gained by either parent or child "losing face," and telling a kid "don't" is merely pointing the way to scoring a point off father.

When not even members of the House of Lords itself can agree on how to punish and what penalties to apply to youngsters, it's no wonder that the average parent's ideas are muddled. According to the theories, kids go wrong for lack of freedom, affection and approval. If they can't win family love and fun, they'll take beatings and hate instead—anything so long as they have attention. We go for the fun. I have never thrashed any of my sons, and don't ever intend to. Not that they haven't had to dodge a clout sometimes! But I don't think it matters if a parent lashes out in annoyance; such blows sting but don't stay.

Setting a good example—a virtue that older children grow tired of hearing about—is as important as discipline in maintaining order. Though nobody set out to teach him "Thank you," one of the first things Jonathan learned to say was "*Han-doo!*" When the table is being cleared, he runs back and forth to the sink with one spoon at a time. At two a youngster is tremendously anxious to do a share of the work.

The Problem Of Swearing

But there are big snags in the age of imitation. If I shout at someone, Jonathan shouts. If one of the boys spits, Jonathan starts spitting everywhere like an April cloud. And if anyone uses bad language he's likely to repeat it at the least suitable moment. There's wisdom in the story of the angry father cuffing a baby and saying: "I'll teach you to swear, you young b——!" It's our worst family failing.

But my sons, like most kids, don't learn all their language at home. The first school they go to here is in the village. The playground language is sprinkled with "Saxon" words, and after a week or two of this, swanking in front of young friends brings out the "bees" in a blue swarm. I don't try to stop them swearing; what would be the use? I hope the habit will eventually bore them.

After the "adjectival old haybag" episode, however, something had to be done. "Swear if you want to among yourselves and away from the house," I said to the kids. "But if you swear *at* anyone you'll land right in serious trouble with me. In any case, put a ruddy sock in it when people are about. It's a silly habit to keep using bad language all the time; if you must swear, save it up for special occasions that need it." I wasn't at all sure that this summing up was adequate, but it was the best that I could do. It is more or less how most adults behave. The only right way with kids is to treat them like reasonable but *human* beings.

As a result of not being "sat on" too heavily, my five sons appear to be growing up with their moral courage intact. Every kid, in my view, will grow up not into a plaster saint but at least into a decent citizen, provided any adult around it is on the child's side. But in this difficult business many parents make a bad mistake. They insist that their unlucky kids should live faultless and angelic lives. In a world that is not made that way, it's a heavy burden for young shoulders. Can they rightly be expected to carry it?

A few weeks ago a record number of schoolchildren around here, ours included, persuaded their parents to buy them tickets for our nearest repertory theatre. The play was Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*, and it provided a salty answer to the question. In the third act the kids took Liza Doolittle's famous line in one healthy, heartening yell: "Not bloody likely!" THE END

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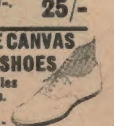

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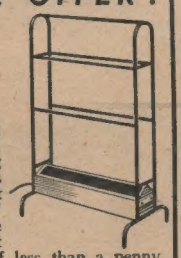

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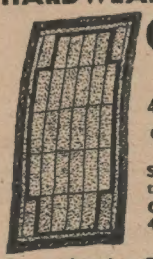

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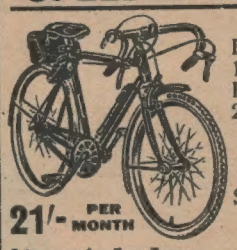

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